

AUGUST 27 2007

(*With Corrections on p.24 - 07/08/15)

DOWNTOWN BOCA RATON MASTER PLAN UPDATE



U R B A N D E S I G N A S S O C I A T E S

DOWNTOWN BOCA RATON MASTER PLAN UPDATE

PREPARED FOR

Community Redevelopment
Agency
City of Boca Raton



PREPARED BY

Urban Design Associates

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URBAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES

JULY 21 2008

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DRAFT

Any And All Content Subject To Change Prior To Release Of Final Document

JULY 21 2008

DOWNTOWN BOCA RATON INTERIM DESIGN GUIDELINES

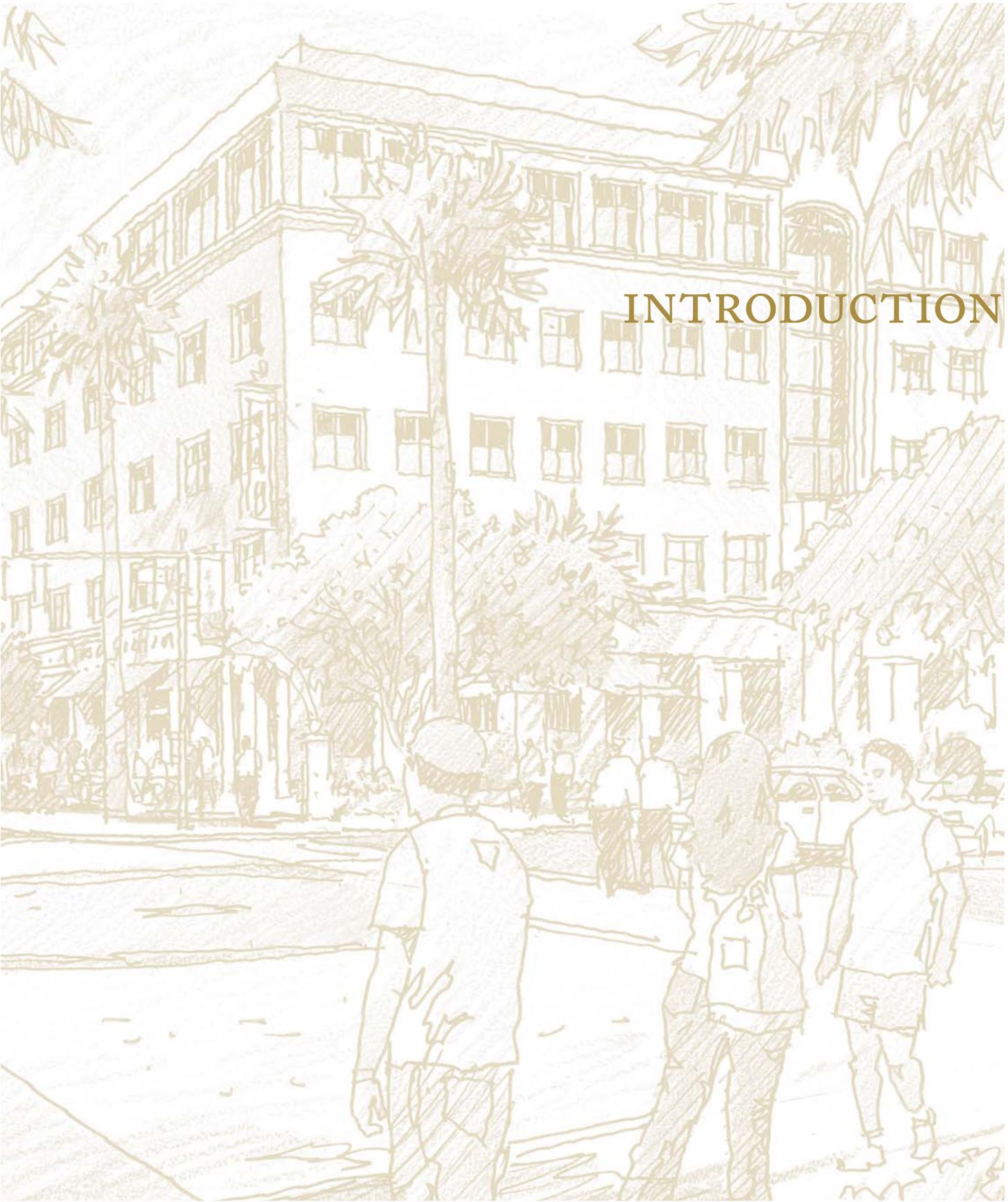


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INTRODUCTION

UPDATING THE VISION

This Master Plan Update was commissioned to provide a framework for successfully realizing the Vision for Downtown Boca Raton in the context of the issues it faces today. The original Vision for Downtown Boca Raton was clearly articulated in 1982:

“The community of Boca Raton is unique. As part of one of the most rapidly growing regions in the country, it has maintained standards of excellence in the residential neighborhoods which ensure continuing economic vitality and environmental quality. Now is the time to apply the same standards of excellence to Downtown, before its decline as a commercial center and acceleration of blight go any further. Redevelopment implies a long-range commitment to a public policy to enhance the Downtown for present and future generations to live, work, shop, and enjoy.”

Much was accomplished as a result of that vision and the plans that followed.

SANBORN SQUARE This early effort to create a public space in the center of Downtown provides a quiet and relaxing place along Federal Highway and a setting for the historic Town Hall by Addison Mizner.

MIZNER PARK One of the most recognized and celebrated urban developments of recent times, this mixed-use project created an urban focus for cultural, retail, business, and residential uses in Downtown.

ARTS AND CULTURE The Art Museum and Amphitheater, developed as part of Mizner Park, have become the focus of cultural life for the City.

TAMING OF FEDERAL HIGHWAY By coordinating traffic on several arterials, it was possible to prevent the widening to six lanes of this major thoroughfare.

PLAZA REAL SOUTH A public easement through a private development has created an urban street lined with restaurants and mixed-use buildings.

With Mizner Park, Boca Raton led the way in developing urban town centers and reestablishing the idea of a Downtown on the Florida Coast. It became a model for others to follow. As a result, it now finds itself in competition with newer, more urban developments. And there is an increasing sense that the Downtown has lost its way with respect to achieving the vision created in 1982.

For these reasons, the City commissioned this Plan Update to provide a framework for making informed decisions on the location, type, and design of development, and on priorities for funding. This Master Plan Update will also be coordinated with the Comprehensive Plan Update and the Multi-Modal Transportation District efforts.



Town Hall



Sanborn Square



Mizner Park



Plaza Real South



Downtown Boca Raton Today: All of the buildings are color coded by type of use. Public open space is indicated in dark green.



PROCESS

1 MARCH–APRIL: UNDERSTANDING

- » Focus Groups
- » Interviews
- » Public Meeting
- » Data Collection and Research

2 APRIL–MAY: EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES

- » Charette (opening with summary of input and preliminary ideas)
- » Focus Group Meetings
- » Open House
- » Public Presentation

3 MAY–AUGUST: DECIDING

- » Summary Reports
- » Newsletter
- » Draft Plan
- » Public Presentations

Understanding the perspectives and priorities of the people who live, work and play in Boca Raton is critical to the development of a successful Master Plan. Throughout the Plan development process, the UDA team met with a group of interested and committed individuals. The first series of interviews and meetings, including a public meeting, took place during the reconnaissance phase of the planning process. Valuable insights were gained regarding the history of the area, present problems, and future aspirations.

The group of people who participated in these various venues was diverse – residents who have lived here for years as well as newer residents. Smaller focus groups were held with developers, landowners, realtors, arts and cultural institutions, heritage advocates, City staff, providers of emergency services, and the Federation of Homeowners who in turn represent hundreds of residents in neighborhoods throughout Boca Raton.

We heard a wide array of opinions and advice through one-on-one and small group discussions, focus groups, public meetings, and an online survey posted on the City’s website. People have been generous in helping us understand their different perspectives and in finding common ground.



Participants at public meetings



A group gathering at an open house meeting

A great deal of common ground exists on the need for the Boca Raton Downtown Master Plan to:

- » Improve the public realm,
- » Improve connectivity for people and vehicles,
- » Support existing special places and provide ideas for new special places, and
- » Create a sense of wholeness to Downtown.

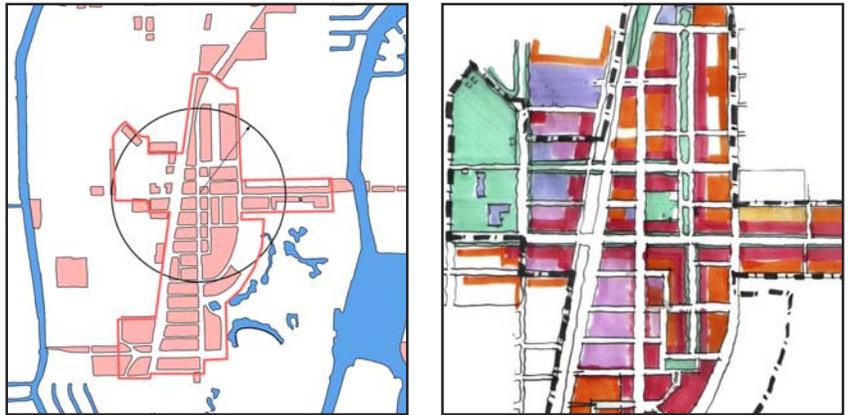
Building on this common ground, the Downtown Master Plan is being developed so that it is able to serve as both a tool to guide decision-making related to Boca Raton's downtown, and to provide ideas to inspire existing and new developments to provide the diversity and type of development for an economically healthy and sustainable Downtown Boca Raton.



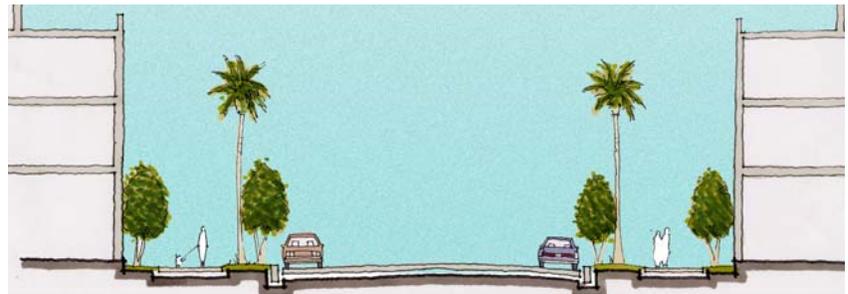
An informal group discussion at an open house meeting



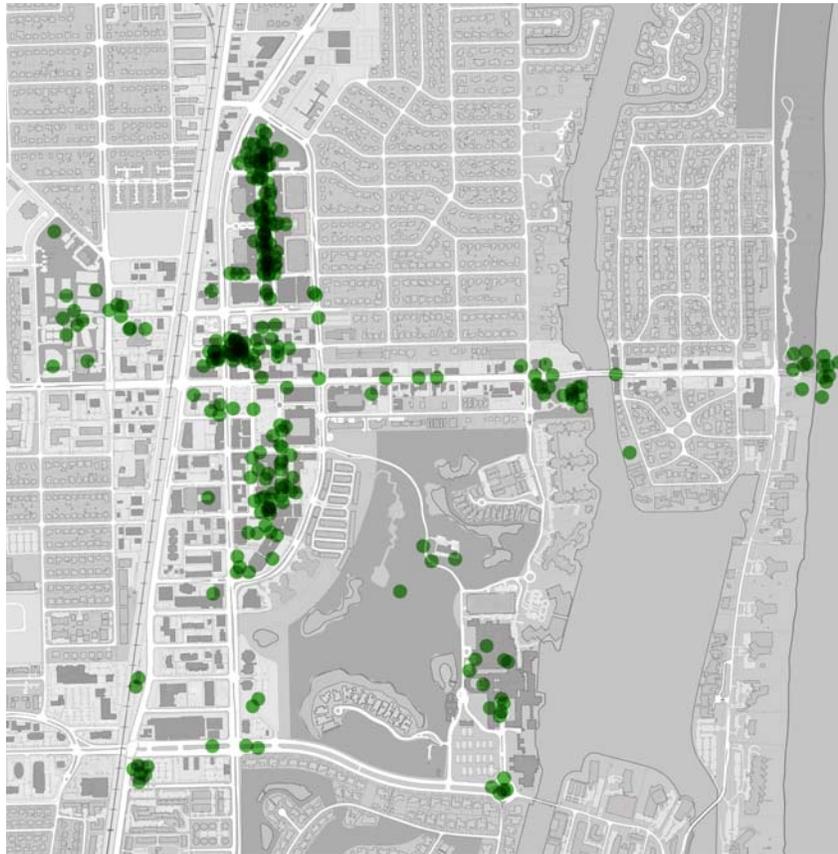
Citizen presentation at a public meeting



Commercial X-Ray analysis and a preliminary framework drawing



Proposed road section along Palmetto Park Road



Green dots show participants' views of Boca Raton's strengths

STRENGTHS

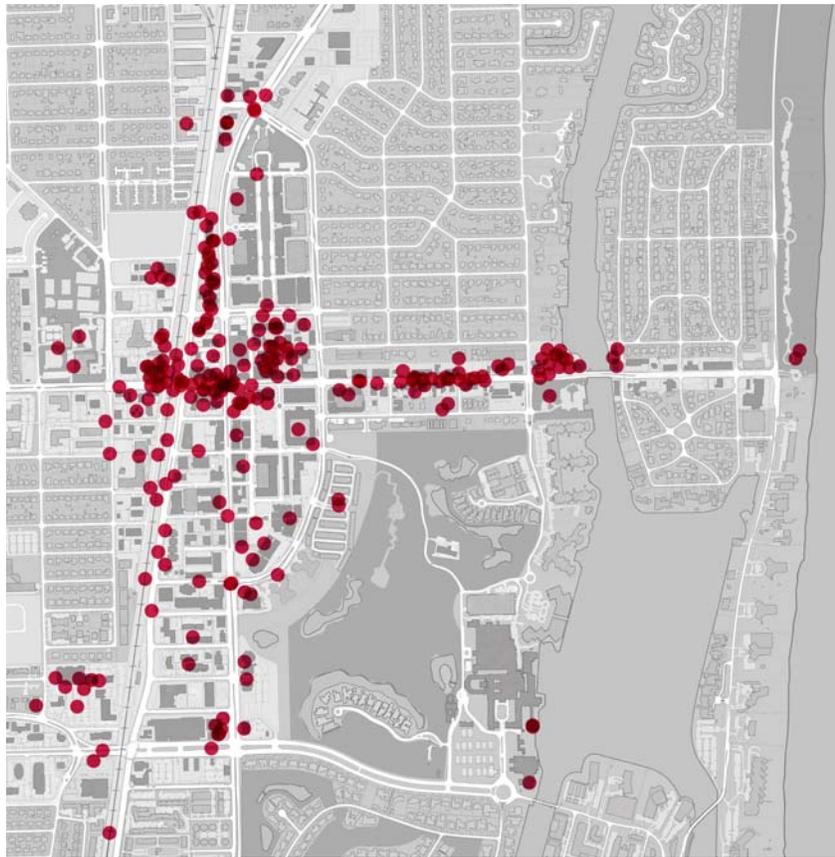
Participants were provided a base map of Downtown Boca Raton as well as three green, three red, and three blue dots. They were asked to use the dots to identify those places on the map that they considered to be strengths (green dots), weaknesses (red dots), and priority areas for change that would help achieve their vision for the future (blue dots). The summary of each of the dot types provides valuable insights.

The pattern of green dots creates a north/south pattern reflecting the areas that have been most worked on during the past 20 years.

- » Mizner Park
- » Royal Palm Plaza
- » Sanborn Square
- » Mix of uses
- » Like that downtown is not too dense
- » Town Hall, heritage
- » Boca Raton Resort and Club
- » Oceanfront
- » Silver Palm Park
- » Civic uses – City Hall, Library
- » Landscaping
- » Mix of restaurants
- » Cultural activities
- » Adjacent residential areas



Photos showing some of Boca Raton's strengths: Sanborn Square, the Boca Raton Resort, Mizner Park, and the beach.



Red dots highlight weaknesses in Boca Raton

WEAKNESSES

The red dots, or worst places, are generally in an east/west pattern. The greatest concentration of these are in the center of Downtown. This suggests that the next phase of effort needs to complete the north/south connections in this area and deal with east/west ones, especially along Palmetto Park Road.

CONNECTIONS

- » Not pedestrian-friendly; Downtown lacks connectivity
- » Difficult experiences in traffic and intersections
- » Lack of connection to waterfront/ access to water
- » Not enough green space
- » Intersection of Federal and Palmetto
- » Poor entrances and exits (except southern)

PLACES

- » Palmetto Park Road
- » Abandoned Wildflower property
- » No sense of place
- » Rundown properties
- » Stretch of Dixie Highway, behind Mizner Park

AS WELL AS...

- » Parking
- » Uncertainty and stalled development
- » Lack of relevant activities

Photos illustrating the problems of Boca Raton such as street widths and commercial uses



ISSUES

At the most fundamental level, the issue is whether Downtown can become a cohesive Downtown. It is now perceived to be a collection of separate places. On the positive side, it has all of the functions you would expect to find in a Downtown, including City Hall, museums, a library, post office, office buildings, shops, educational uses, performance venues, parks, and an increasing amount of residential uses. But, it does not have the coherence that brings all of these uses together.

The portrait drawing on page 3 clearly illustrates one of the key problems facing Downtown. It is a narrow, north/south band of mixed-use development, cut off from other parts of the City. Downtown is constrained by the barriers created by north/south arterials and the railroad lines which have made it difficult to create a unified Downtown. Most people's perceptions of Downtown's boundaries include the railroad tracks as the western edge, or even Federal Highway. And yet, City Hall, the library, and the Children's Museum are west of that boundary. People express great pleasure about walking among uses in certain specific areas such as Mizner Park, but experience great difficulty in walking across major streets. As a result, Downtown presents itself as a collection of separated and isolated destinations. There is evidence that some businesses are leaving and that the competition from more urban and walkable downtowns is drawing customers that would otherwise come here.

As illustrated on page 9, most of the currently approved development pro-

posals are located within this same narrow north-south band. Each is designed with concern for the public realm immediately around it, but without an overall framework, it is difficult to visualize how they would all work together to create a Downtown.

In short, Downtown Boca Raton has not been able to maintain its early lead due to a series of factors that have prevented the vision from being fully realized.

PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

An essential element in successful downtowns is an interconnected network of streets and open space that provides comfortable pedestrian connections. Boca Raton has successful pedestrian pockets, but fails to provide a pedestrian network that links its various parts. A particularly vivid example can be seen on Palmetto Park Road where, despite efforts to create a pedestrian-friendly environment, past programs have been unsuccessful in doing so. The emphasis given to through traffic, combined with road and sidewalk design that encourage vehicles to travel at high speed, has made it impossible to provide this vital attribute.

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

While the original vision called for an holistic approach to development in which each part contributes to the whole, most projects are conceived and dealt with by the City on a project-by-project basis.



Existing conditions along Federal Highway and Palmetto Park Road

DESIGN GUIDELINES

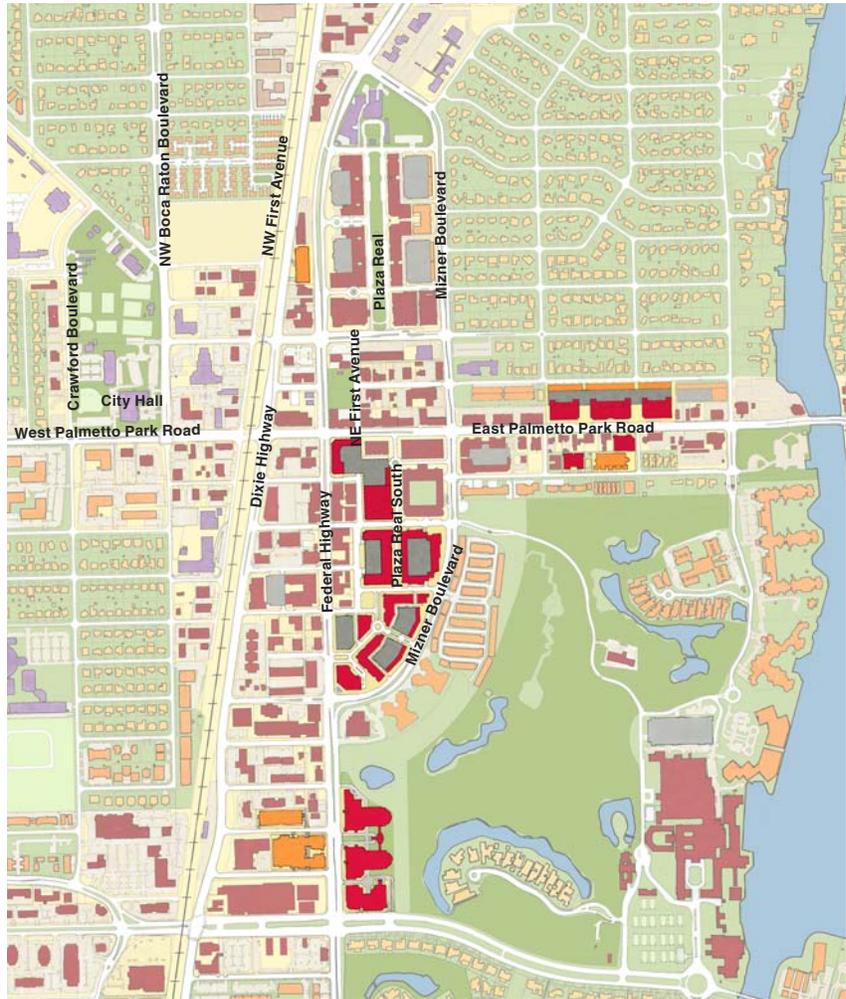
Originally conceived to simplify the development process, the existing design guidelines have become cumbersome. They are overly simplistic with the same requirements irrespective of site size or location. This has resulted in a uniform rather than diverse built result.

DEVELOPMENT MARKET

In recent years, the strong, high-end investor and second home market for condominiums has produced very high land values and units which are not occupied much of the year, if at all. It has not been considered feasible to develop year-round housing in a wide range of prices because of the high land cost. This Presents an impediment to the long-term viability of Downtown.

BARRIERS

The combined barriers which define the edges of Downtown have caused the City and the development community to focus all of their efforts in a north-south corridor, limiting the range of development opportunities and preventing the creation of a truly cohesive, real Downtown.



Portrait of existing conditions in Boca Raton, including proposed future developments, as of March 2007

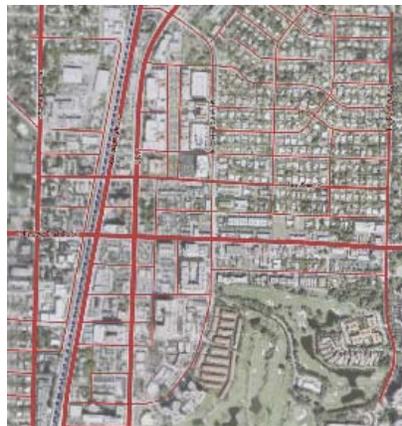
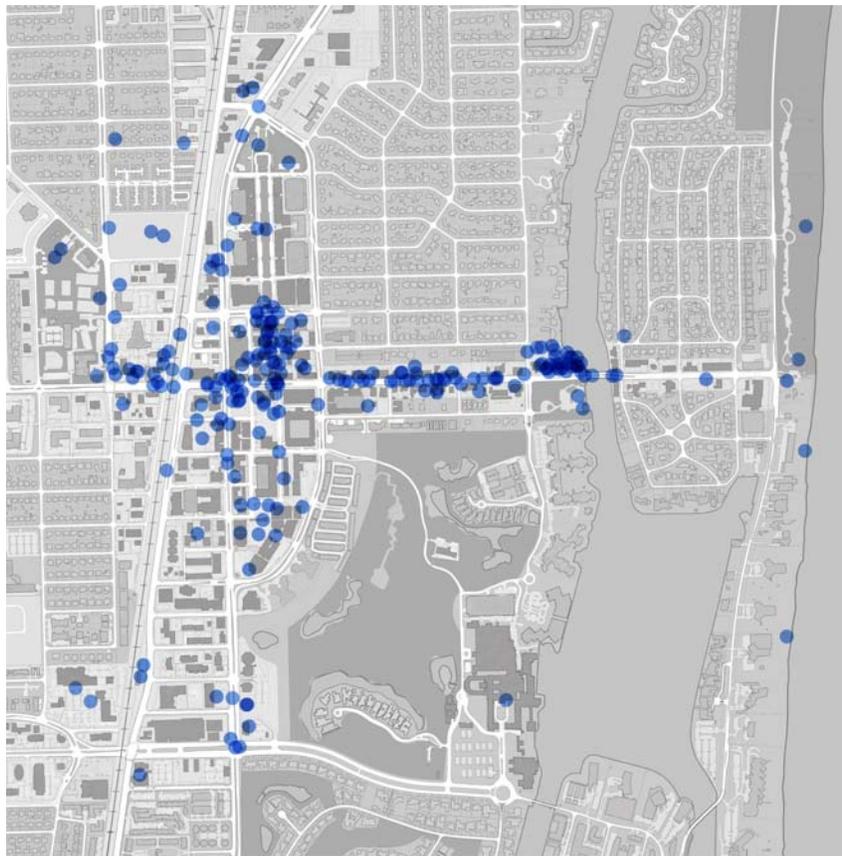


Diagram and photo of existing barriers within downtown Boca Raton



Blue dots mark participants' visions for Boca Raton

VISIONS

Participants identified a number of priorities for change in Downtown Boca Raton by placing blue dots on the map. These priorities point to specific places where change is needed. The most dense clusters of blue dots show support for taking action to:

- » Improve Palmetto Park Road East
- » Take action on the Wildflower property
- » Address the future of the 'Spine' area

In addition to identifying the need to improve specific places, there was also widespread support for creating a Downtown that:

- » Is more pedestrian-friendly
- » Provides a mix of people and places to go, and many different reasons to come Downtown
- » Has a variety of building types and architectural harmony
- » Has a strong cultural atmosphere
- » Provides people with the recreation, leisure, and outdoor options they're looking for, while also meeting residents' daily life needs
- » Has an identity
- » Connects people to water
- » Is a place for families to live and grow; offers quality of place to live-work-play and affordable housing for employees
- » Takes advantage of the demographic affluence, while also creating the conditions that allow small mom-and-pop shops to thrive.



Underutilized land in the spine area and "pedestrian calming" elements along Palmetto Park Road



Areas for future visions and improvement: 1st Street, pedestrian realm, and Federal Highway

SUMMARY OF KEY MESSAGES TO DATE

- » Many people are excited by the opportunity to strengthen Downtown Boca Raton. They see a need and opportunity for the Master Plan to connect a series of strong, yet currently disconnected, parts of Downtown.
- » There is widespread agreement regarding many of the steps that can be taken to strengthen the connections in Downtown. This includes creating and enhancing pedestrian, cycling and transit connections while still facilitating smooth car access and parking.
- » Many people are looking at Boca Raton's Downtown and comparing it to what's happening in nearby areas like Las Olas and Delray Beach. They are interested in making Boca Raton a place that has more of the activity, life, and feel of these places, and also better meets the needs of the residents.
- » The Intracoastal Waterway and the Atlantic Ocean are great assets to Downtown Boca Raton. The City would benefit from easier access from Downtown to enjoy the water.
- » It is important to take advantage of opportunities to preserve and celebrate Boca Raton's heritage. This should be done in a way that fits with the other elements of the future vision many people have for the City.

- » In order to make the Master Plan a reality, some critical policy changes will be required to facilitate public and private investment as well as development and design decisions.
- » In response to the ideas tested during the Charrette, participants identified and confirmed that priority areas for actions include:
 - › Making it easier to cross Central Palmetto Park Road – this is a critical Downtown connection.
 - › Making it possible to connect south from Mizner Park to Royal Palm Plaza.
 - › Making more of Sanborn Square, how it's used and how it's connected to the surrounding area.
 - › Improving Palmetto Park Road East, including dramatically improving the streetscape and experience for people making their way to the waterfront.
- » Provide an appropriate mix of office, residential, hotel, retail, cultural, civic, and recreational uses.
- » Provide a coordinated strategy for parking and access.
- » Provide the basis for a diverse architectural and environmental character for the various parts of Downtown that both reflect its history and current scale.
- » Enhance Downtown's connection to the waterfronts and its quality of open space.

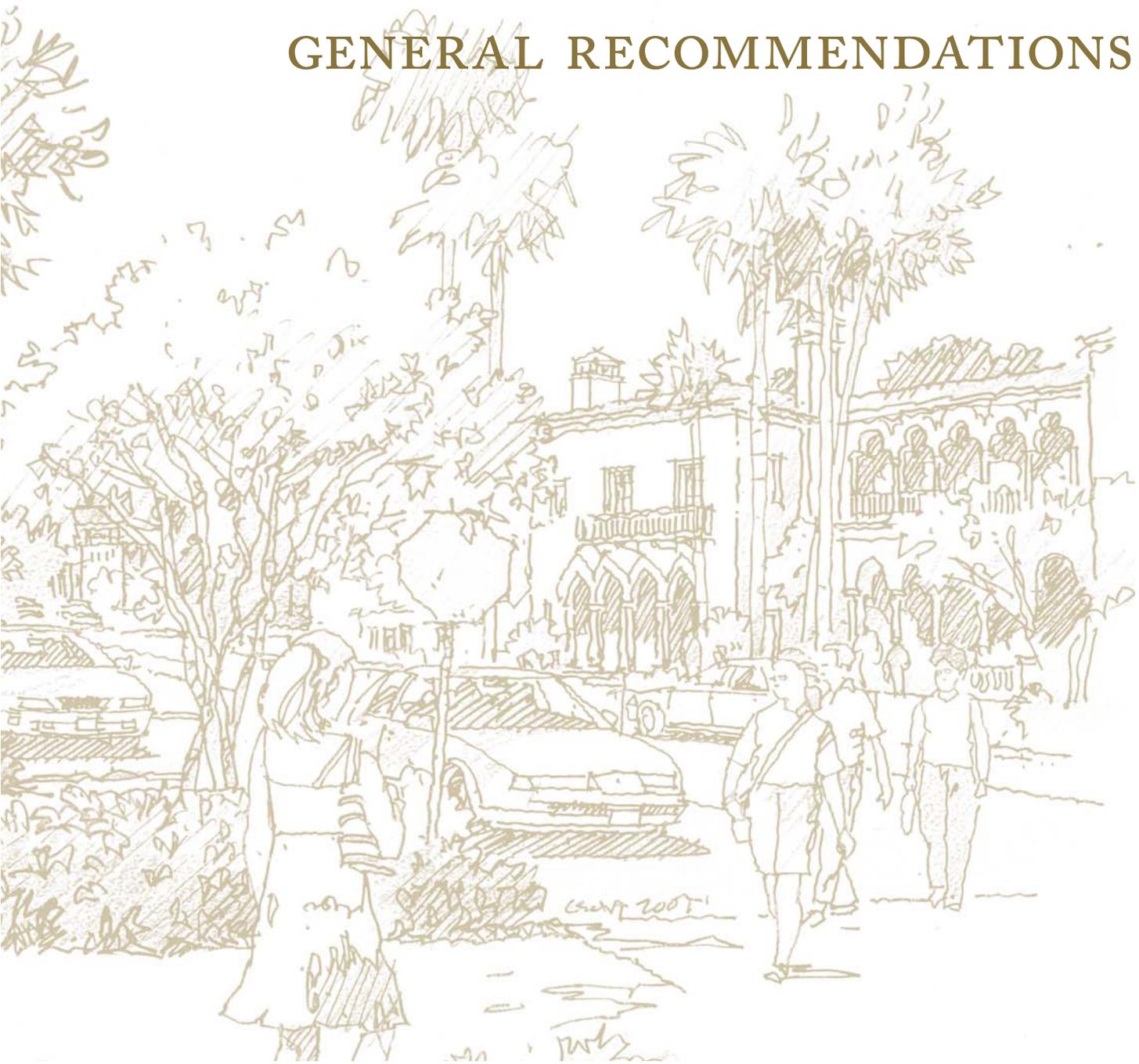
GOALS AND PRINCIPLES

From this input and our analyses, we have identified a set of Goals which can serve as Planning Principles:

- » Create a unique identity for Downtown Boca Raton as the cultural, civic, and specialized retail center of the region, with a full complement of residential accommodations and recreational amenities.
- » Create a comfortable pedestrian-scale environment connecting all of the parts of Downtown, while providing appropriate accommodation of vehicular movement.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS



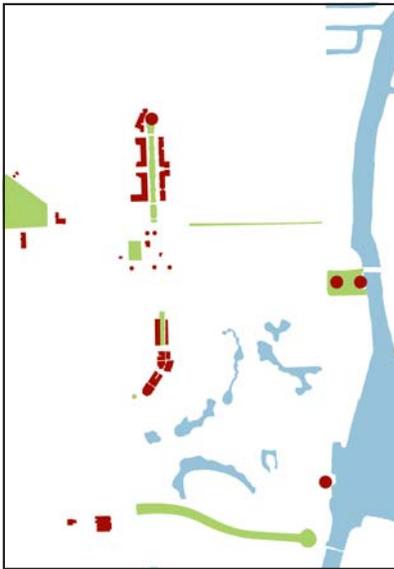
PLANNING STRATEGY

During the planning process, the need to create a better pedestrian network connecting Downtown's various parts emerged as the participants' top priority for this part of the city.

This straightforward goal will be difficult to achieve given the physical constraints of Downtown, especially the north/south barriers.

However, it can be accomplished with a collaborative effort among public agencies, especially those responsible for transportation, private development interests, and citizens groups. The series of diagrams on this page suggests a strategy for connectivity which can be accomplished incrementally. Each public works improvement, each individual development, and each individual property improvement should be done within this strategy. In that way, the collection of individual efforts will result in a unified whole.

The sequence illustrates how to transform Downtown from a collection of separate destinations into an integrated Downtown with a collection of unique addresses.



SEPARATE DESTINATIONS

A series of successful but contained and separate destinations exists, with pedestrian-scaled environments within them, but without connection to each other. These include Mizner Park, Sanborn Square, Plaza Real South, parts of Royal Palm Plaza, Silver Palm Park, and Camino Real west of Federal Highway.



BARRIERS

The design of many streets and lack of adequate sidewalk areas, together with the high speed of traffic on some of the major arterials, cause the street pattern to form a series of barriers that prevent connections between destinations.



A NEW GREEN NETWORK

By systematically improving sidewalks, streetscapes, pedestrian crossings, and public open space, it is possible to create an interconnected network that will encourage people to use the whole of Downtown instead of one isolated destination at a time.



THE GREEN NETWORK AND THE STREET PATTERN

The basis of this network is already in place. It can be extended in some areas without conflicts with key vehicular routes. The most critical points are those in which the pedestrian network crosses major arterials or runs along them. Key areas include Federal Highway, NE and NW Second Street, Palmetto Park Road, Boca Raton Boulevard, and Mizner Boulevard.



A COLLECTION OF QUARTERS

The green network makes it possible to reinforce the existing destinations and anchors as well as to connect them. It also provides a framework for additional development around and between those anchors. Because the various areas within Downtown have different characters and uses, we recommend that defined areas be established within Downtown, each with its own character and mix of uses. These areas could be thought of as neighborhoods or 'Quarters,' such as the Mizner Park Quarter, The Sanborn Square Quarter, etc. Within each Quarter there should be a mix of uses including residential, office, cultural, retail, civic, and entertainment, but the balance of uses, scale of buildings, and character of public open space would be different.

THE PLAN

To implement this strategy, the Master Plan Update is organized into two categories: Frameworks and Quarters.

FRAMEWORKS

The creation of an interconnected network of pedestrian-scaled streets and public open space will provide the much needed connectivity between the parts of Downtown. It can be achieved as a collection of individual initiatives and efforts, rather than one massive operation, but there needs to be a consistent approach to management and design.

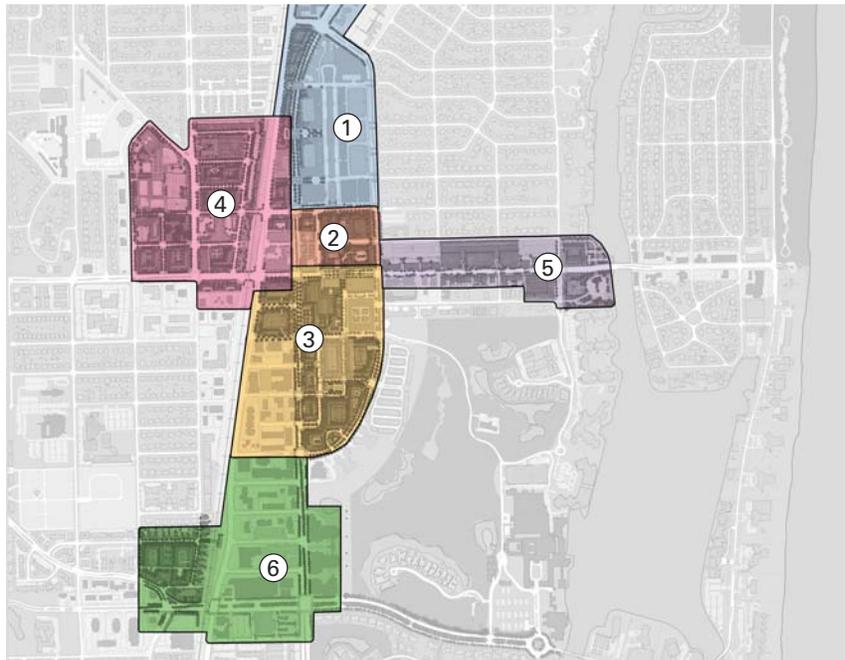
QUARTERS

The Frameworks serve a series of Quarters, each with its own character and types of uses. New development within each quarter should be designed with careful attention to the way in which the proposed development will support, enhance, and build upon the assets which exist today. The Quarters include:

- 1 Mizner Park Quarter, a parklike space serving retail, offices, shops, and cultural uses;
- 2 Sanborn Square Quarter, a diverse mix of uses and building types adjacent to Sanborn Square;
- 3 Plaza Real South Quarter, a busy office and retail quarter with tall buildings;
- 4 City Hall Quarter which includes City Hall, the new library and office uses related to the future transit stations;
- 5 Palmetto Park East Quarter which will create a pleasant walk to the Intracoastal waterway; and



Open Space Framework



Quarters Diagram

- 6 Camino Real Quarter which is a diverse mix of separate addresses connected by well-landscaped roads.

The Master Plan Update identifies a series of Initiatives within each of these Quarters. They all combine improvements to the public realm and the Framework as well as private development. In this way, 'whole addresses' can be created with each development initiative. The plan drawing on the following page highlights potential developments and public improvements in each of the Quarters. The perspective drawings on these pages illustrate the way in which improvements to the public realm should be coordinated with development projects.



Perspective of an improved Palmetto Park Road, west of Federal Highway



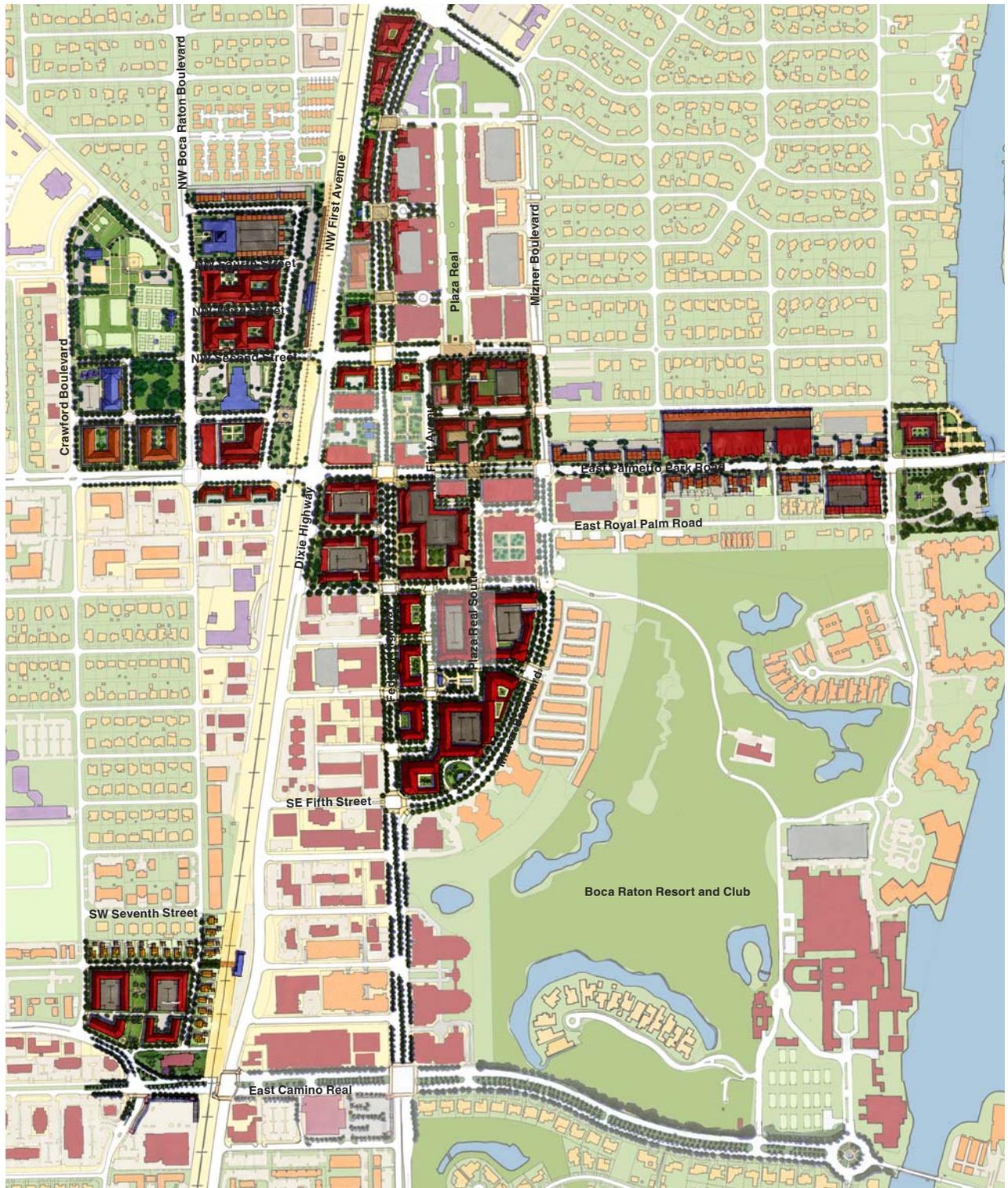
Palmetto Park Road, east of Mizner Boulevard, with an improved residential and pedestrian environment



A view of a revised intersection crossing Palmetto Park Road at Plaza Real South



Improved street crossing for NE First Avenue at NE Second Street south of Mizner Park



Illustrative Master Plan: Potential future development programs are illustrated in bold colors



FRAMEWORKS



FRAMEWORKS

The proposed Framework of Streets and Public Open Space is illustrated in the large diagram on the facing page. It emphasizes the continuity of pedestrian experience throughout the Downtown. To achieve this, a series of modifications to the current framework are needed. All of these are essential to the effective development of the Multi-Modal Transportation District which will change the basis for evaluating development potential.

Design Guidelines are another type of Framework that gives form to development. We have included suggestions for revising those guidelines in this section because they are based on the character of the streets and public open spaces on which they are located.

ESTABLISH A HIERARCHY OF STREETS

To use new techniques that can both accommodate the needs of traffic and create a pedestrian environment effectively, it is first necessary to recognize the different categories of streets and types of traffic.

APPLY URBAN STANDARDS TO DOWNTOWN THOROUGHFARES

Florida's version of the Context-Based Thoroughfare Program provides an opportunity to introduce urban standards on through streets in Downtown. The City should consider applying urban standards to the portion of Federal Highway between Camino Real and Mizner Boulevard, East Palmetto Park Road of Crawford Boulevard, and all of Mizner Boulevard, and North East Second Street.

CREATE PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALKS

Key connections including NE Second Street at Plaza Real North and Palmetto Park Road at Plaza Real South should include pedestrian lights, expanded crosswalks, and streetscape improvements.

IMPROVE SIDEWALKS

Improve the pedestrian environment with a combination of public improvements and enhanced design guidelines for private development.

IMPROVE AND COMPLETE BIKEWAY NETWORK

Enhance the safety of bicycle lanes through design changes and fill gaps in the existing system.

DEVELOP A PARKING PROGRAM

Develop a Parking Program that combines public garages and public parking spaces on private developments.

SUPPORT TRANSIT INITIATIVES

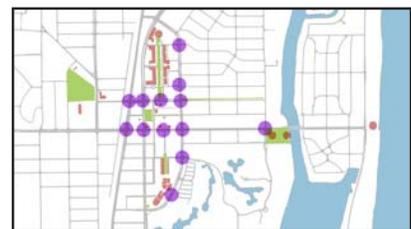
Support Transit in all forms, including regional rail on the FEC line, Shuttles to Tri-Rail, and the Downtown Circulator as part of the parking system.

REVISE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Revise the Design Guidelines to encourage diversity of building form and enhancement of the public realm.



Urban street standards



Create pedestrian crosswalks



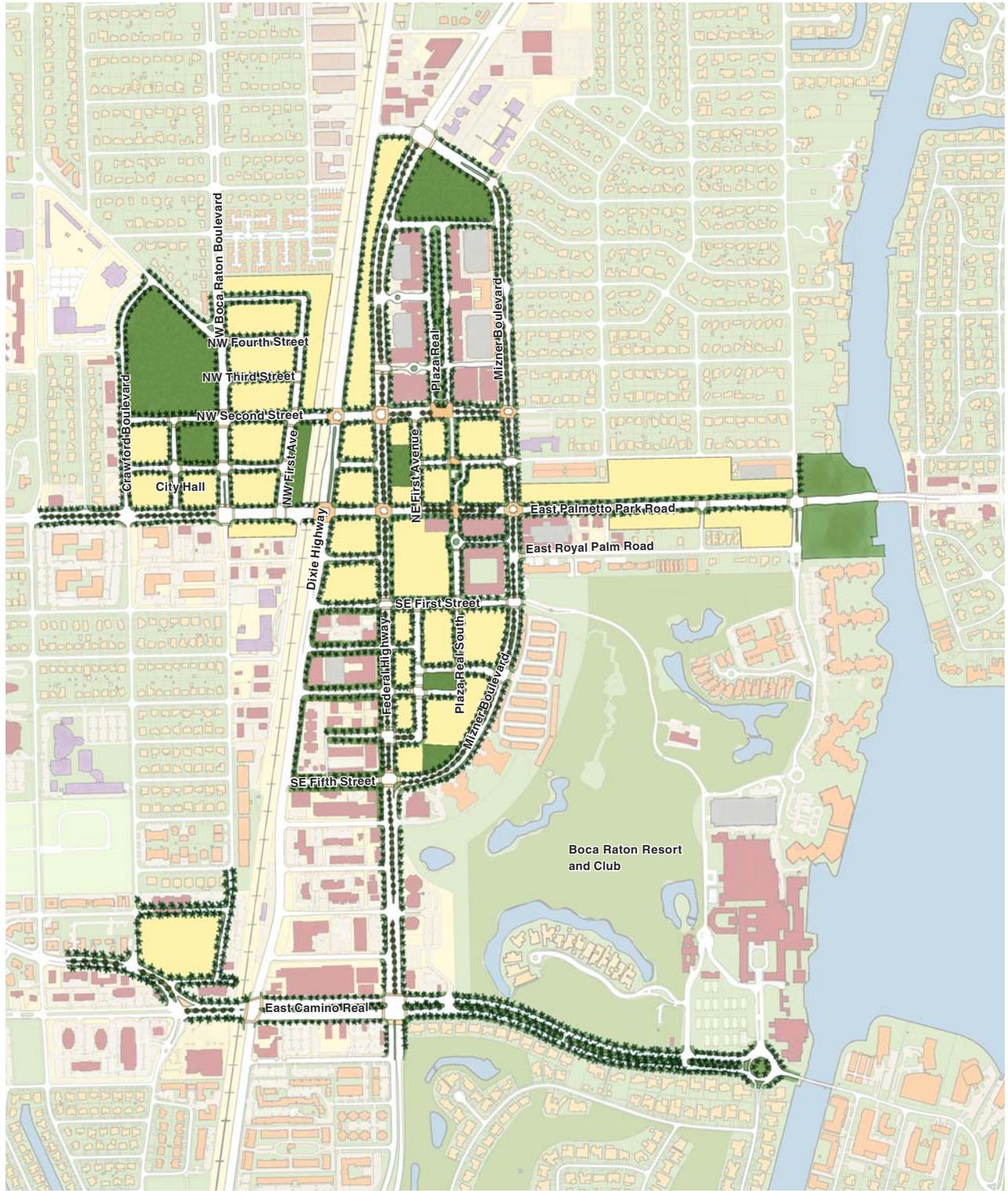
Improve sidewalks



Parking program



Transit initiative



Framework Diagram: Streets and Public Open Space

(*Corrections to Map on 07/08/15)

STREET HIERARCHY

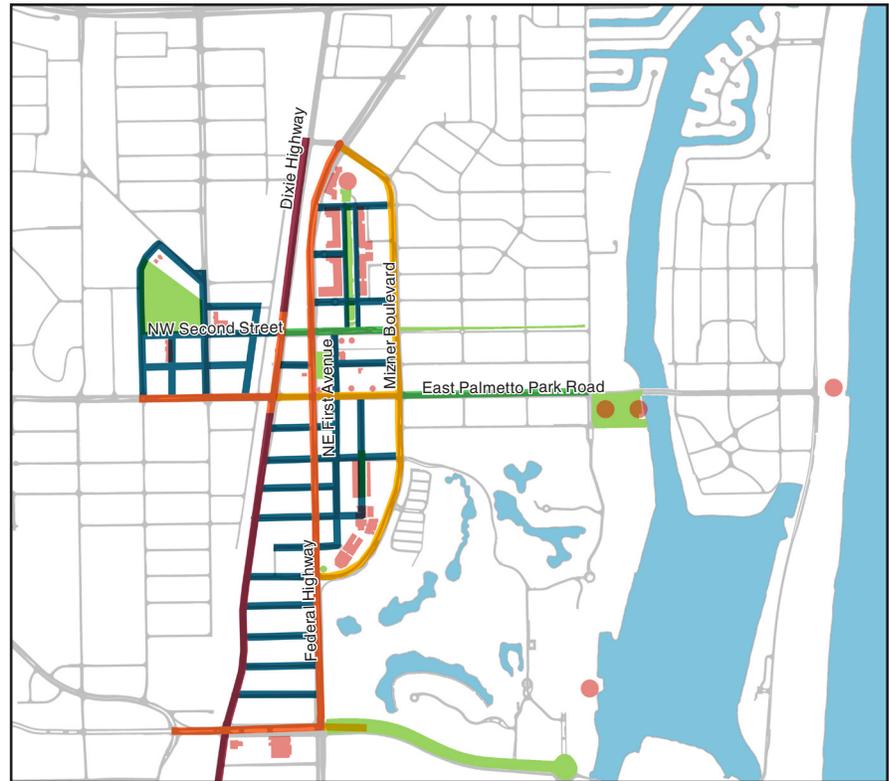
The engineering and design of some of the streets in Downtown are based on standards that generally apply to suburban conditions, encourage high speed travel, and are not consistent with the goal of creating a unified downtown. In recent years, a series of advancements in the art of street design have provided some techniques for both serving traffic needs and creating an appropriate urban environment. To use these techniques, it is first necessary to recognize the different categories of street and that a hierarchy exists based on the volumes and types of traffic. With this agreed to, it is possible to modify the detailed design of existing streets to be consistent with their urban function and the nature of traffic using them. The hierarchy would include the following idealized models which then serve as a model for revisions to existing streets:

TYPE A

Type A streets are high mobility streets that may carry a great deal of through traffic but which also need to provide safe and comfortable pedestrian environments associated with mixed and sometimes dense land uses. The design of these streets must enable pedestrians to cross safely at key points. These include Federal Highway, Palmetto Park Road West of Federal Highway, Camino Real west of Federal Highway, and Dixie Highway (limited pedestrian role at Second Street and Palmetto Park Road).

TYPE B

Type B streets provide a combination of access and mobility both of which are important to the overall network. Type B streets carry some through traffic, but typically at a lower volume than Type A. These are often four lane (or more)



Street Type Diagram

divided streets located in more sensitive contexts in which increased pedestrian movements need to be respected. They include Palmetto Park Road between Federal Highway and Mizner Boulevard, Mizner Boulevard, and Camino Real east of Federal Highway.

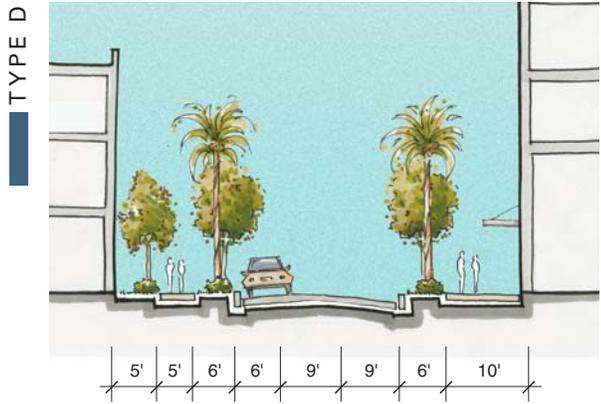
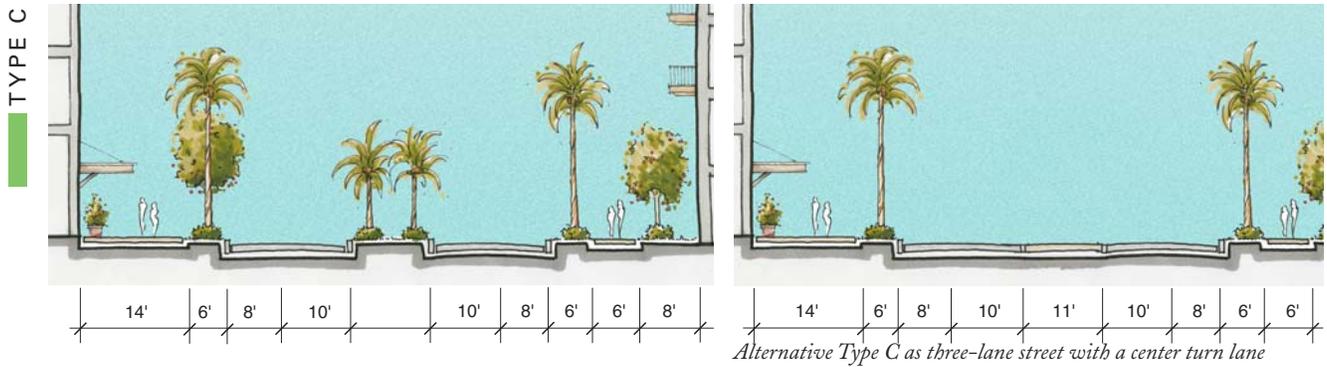
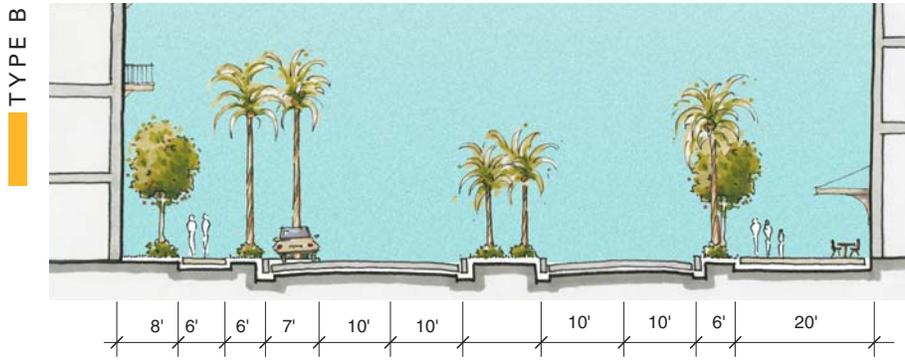
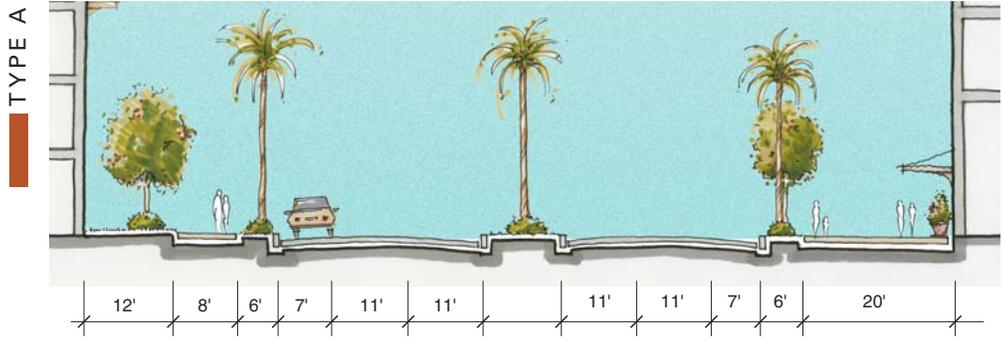
TYPE C

Access streets, Type C streets are either three-lane streets or two lanes with a median. They provide vehicular access to parking and pedestrian access to homes and businesses and have the highest level of activity and conflicts. As such, they should be designed to encourage slower speed traffic and to serve pedestrian-scale uses along them. Second Street and East Palmetto Park Road of Mizner Boulevard are examples of Type C streets.

TYPE D

Type D are two-lane local streets which carry primarily local traffic. These are often streets that provide access to residential areas. Vehicle speeds should be low in anticipation of unexpected pedestrian movements (such as children).

Dixie Highway, indicated in red in the plan diagram, will carry the most through traffic and for much of its length will accommodate higher speed. Additional landscape treatment should be provided in the public right-of-way on both sides of the road, especially the east side of the road. In the area between Palmetto Park Road and Second Street, traffic should be slowed down in order to facilitate pedestrian cross walks.



Detailed cross-sections of street types

URBAN STANDARDS FOR DOWNTOWN THOROUGHFARES

The idealized models when applied to existing streets suggest a series of modifications. These can apply to the streets indicated in the diagram on this page. A more detailed description is provided for both Federal Highway and East Palmetto Park Road.

Change Traffic Signal Cycles in the Pedestrian Zone

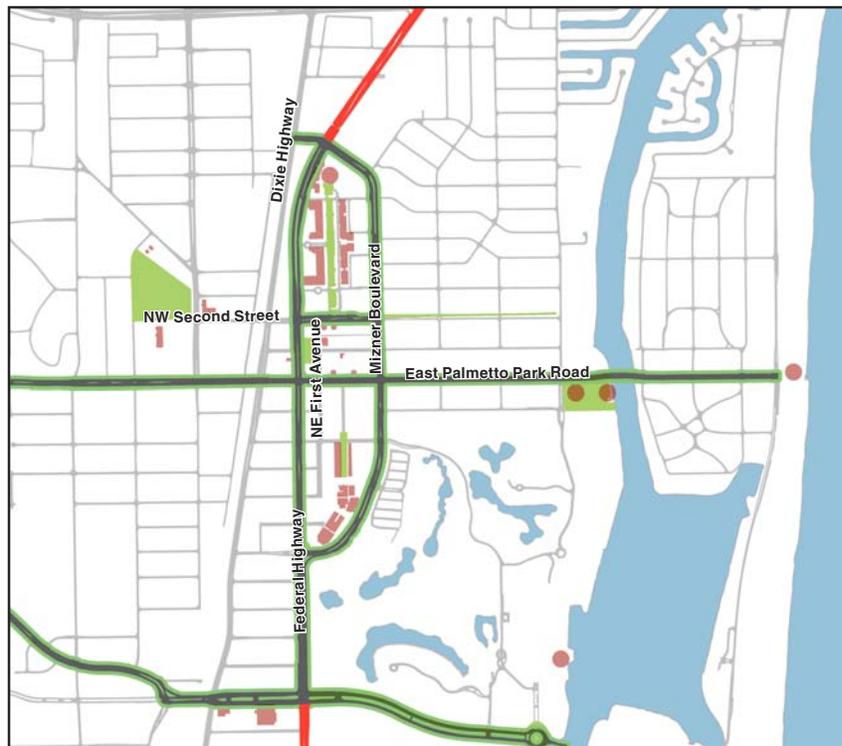
By switching to shorter traffic signal cycles (e.g., 60 seconds instead of 120 seconds), pedestrians will be able to cross more frequently and not be tempted to jaywalk. Capacity will be preserved or even enhanced if these shorter cycles are timed to create a 25- to 30-mph vehicle progression speed.

Eliminate Right Turn Lanes in the Pedestrian Zone

The presence of dedicated right-turn lanes is an anti-urban, anti-pedestrian (longer cross walks, high speed right turns) element that typically is not based on capacity needs, but on preserving vehicle speed in the moving lanes. Since the traffic signal timing would be set to a speed of 25 to 30 mph, speed preservation should no longer be a goal.

Add Traffic Signals/Crosswalks

As speeds are reduced and balance is established, urban traffic signal spacing will improve both pedestrian and vehicular access and circulation. The 300- to 325-foot spacing of intersections of the existing street grid is a perfectly acceptable spacing of signals in a downtown.



Streets with improvements in urban standards

Through vehicles would still be able to progress along the timed corridor at 25 to 30 mph.

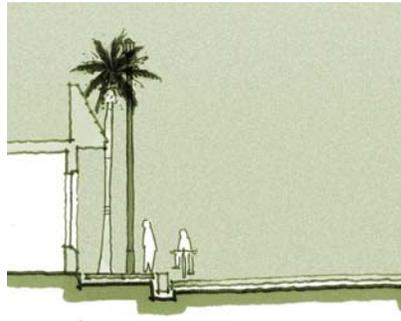
As the development of such a street progresses, more time-intensive efforts to balance the street should follow. These may include:

- » Lane Width Reduction: 10- or 11-foot lanes are appropriate at target speed.
- » Eliminate Shoulder: No shoulder is required on this urban street.
- » Median with Trees: Vertical elements tend to reduce vehicle speeds.
- » Add Edge Vertical Elements (trees, furniture, parking)
- » Reduced Length Left-Turn Lanes (Resulting from shorter signal cycles)
- » Add People or Evidence of People (tables, chairs, etc.)
- » Pedestrian-Scale Lighting
- » Building Height
- » Urban Signage (edge razor signs and similar); perpendicular to storefronts

Federal Highway

Federal Highway is, of course, an important route for vehicular movement. Solutions along a shared street such as this should be focused on creating an appropriate balance between driver and pedestrian needs (as opposed to wants). Vehicles need adequate capacity along the corridor, but they do not need to drive at excessive speeds. Pedestrians need a space that is safe and comfortable, not one that encourages disorganized or dangerous crossings. Fortunately, several relatively low-cost initial design techniques can be used to achieve the desired balance among competing needs.

These include changing traffic signal cycles, improving crosswalks, adding pedestrian signals and trees, and eliminating turning lanes. As new development takes place, or as funding becomes available, modifications to street width can be considered.



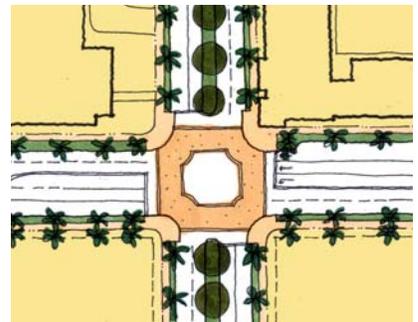
Existing conditions



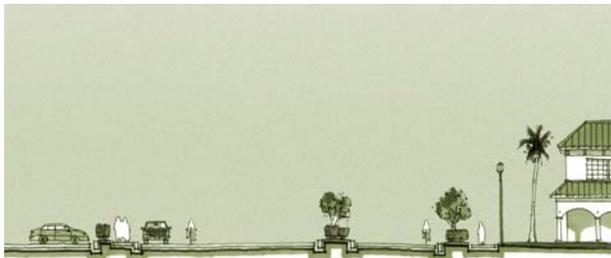
Intersection diagram of the existing condition of Federal Highway at Palmetto Park Road



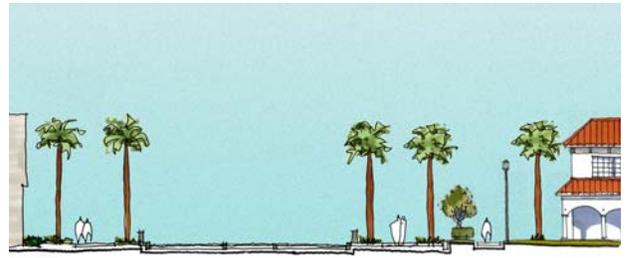
Future condition of new development along Federal Highway with setback and/or curb modifications



Intersection diagram of Federal Highway at Palmetto Park Road, after improvements are made



Before (left) and after (right) sections of NE Second Street at Plaza Real



East Palmetto Park Road

Two alternatives have been tested for Palmetto Park Road, both with the goal of establishing a better pedestrian-vehicle balance.

Alternative 1: Three-lane section with median. The effects of creating a three-lane section of Palmetto Park Road between Mizner Boulevard and NE 5th Avenue do not appear to be overly burdensome. The Boca Raton Downtown DRI Report indicates that 865 cars per hour in the peak direction are expected by the year 2020. This is well within the capacity of one moving lane in each direction, plus a center turn lane, in a section with no traffic signals. According to City Engineering staff analyses, the intersections on either end of the corridor (Palmetto Park Road at Mizner Boulevard and NE 5th) would operate at no worse than vehicle level of service D under the proposed configurations.

Even if this level of capacity were not available, reduced peak hour vehicle levels of service in a downtown area are common and can even be desirable when trying to create a balanced environment. In addition to daily travel demands, this street is an important emergency evacuation route for island residents. A population of the size expected to be on the island could easily be evacuated over a two-to four-hour period in two outbound lanes in the case of weather or other type of emergency, depending on traffic control

and street operation plans. A three-lane section would allow this two-lane outbound type of operation to occur easily.

As indicated in the plan, the middle lane should have a different paving surface and would also be used by emergency vehicles or when there is a vehicle stopped in the moving lane. It can also be a second stacking lane for cars waiting when the bridge is closed.

The detailed design of these improvements will require special care to align with the lanes on the bridge. We recommend that the transition take place east of Fifth Avenue.

Alternative 2: In the course of the planning process, the design team evaluated an alternative concept. By eliminating both the parking lane and the median, it will be possible to both provide four moving lanes and expand the width of the sidewalks on both sides. The City could consider operating this as a four-lane road during the day and then use the outside lanes for parking in the evening.

The cross section indicates that the sidewalk areas have sufficient dimension to encourage the landscape treatment illustrated in the perspective. However, there is a greater distance from curb to curb for crosswalks located at intersections than the three-lane option.

We recommend the three-lane option, in part because it provides the most flexibility for emergency vehicles in the event of a blocked lane.



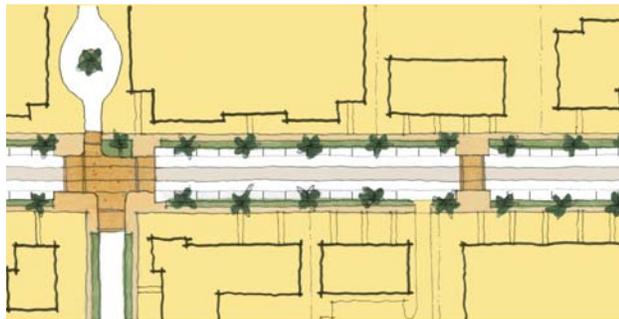
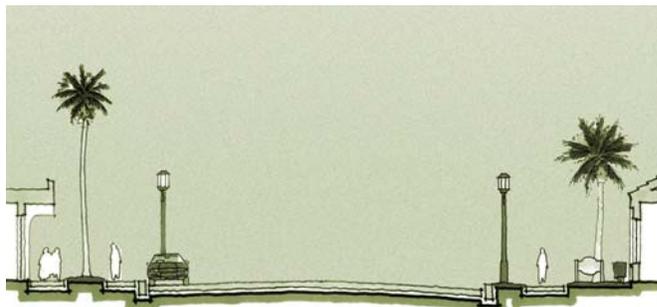
Before view of East Palmetto Park Road



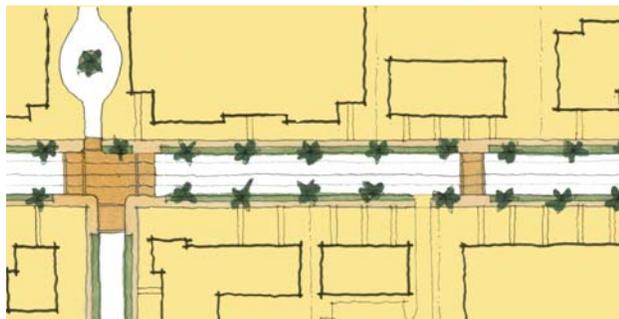
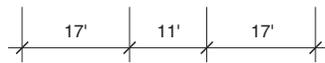
Improved pedestrian environment on East Palmetto Park Road



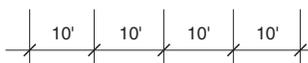
Existing plan (left) and section (right) of East Palmetto Park Road



Revised plan (left) and section (right) of East Palmetto Park Road, showing a three-lane section



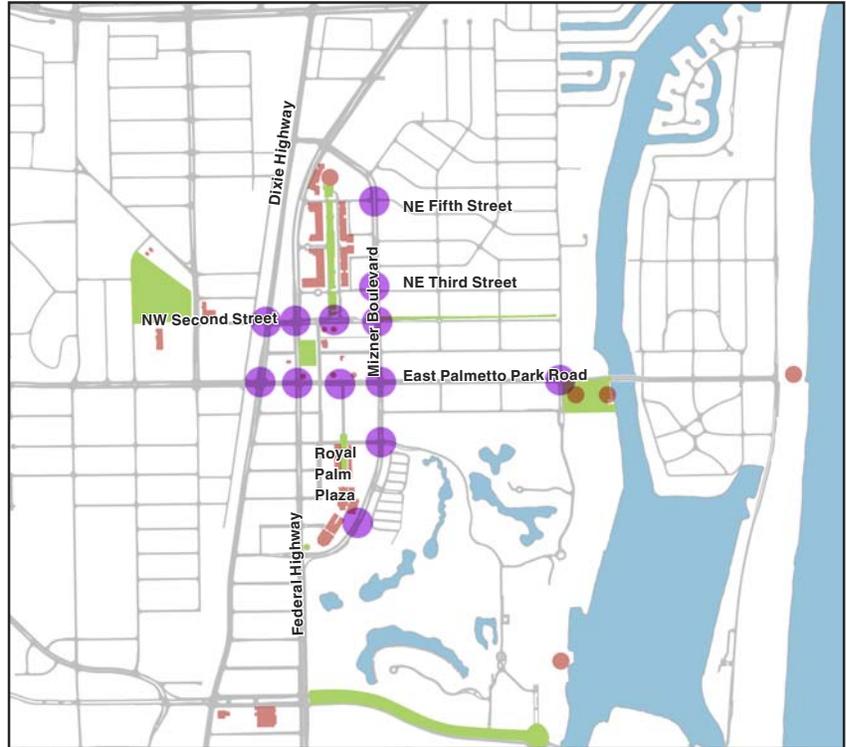
Revised plan (left) and section (right) of Palmetto Park Road, showing a four-lane section



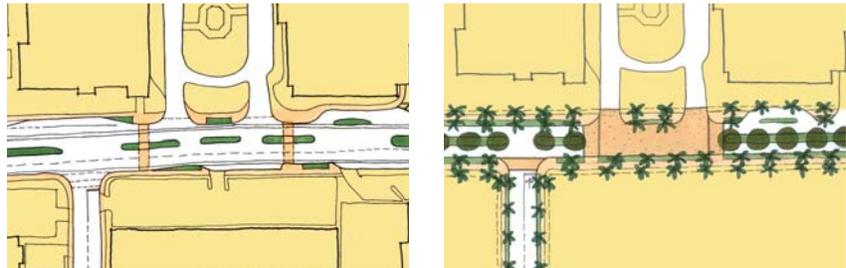
PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALKS

Several approaches to improving the experience of pedestrians crossing streets are needed to achieve the walkable environment that was a unanimous desire of residents and stakeholders. The most basic of these design approaches is simply to reduce the distance that must be crossed at key locations. In various locations, this may mean reducing the number of lanes, reducing the width of lanes, removing auxiliary elements (right turn lanes, shoulders) or reducing corner turning radii. For example, the intersection of Plaza Real (Mizner Park) and NE Second Street features a five-lane (wide lanes) cross-section of NE Second Street. However, on either end of this important pedestrian section (west of Federal Highway and East of Mizner Boulevard), there is only one traffic lane entering NE Second Street. So it is not likely that vehicles need these five lanes, and the space could be better balanced if the space were redistributed. These sorts of logical trade-offs can and should be found at intersections throughout the City.

Priority intersections include: Palmetto Park Road at Plaza Real South, Federal Highway and Mizner Boulevard, NE Second Street at Dixie Highway, Federal Highway and Mizner Boulevard, and Mizner Boulevard at NE Third and Fifth Streets and at SE First Street and Royal Palm Plaza.



Proposed crosswalk improvements indicated with purple circles



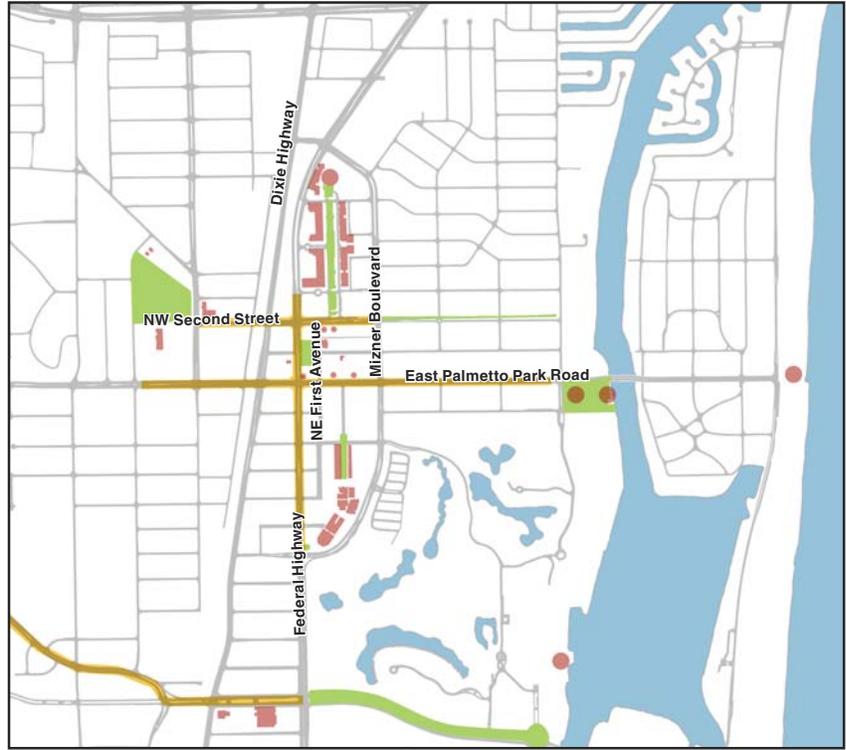
Before and after diagrams showing the pedestrian improvements around Mizner Park



Before (left) and after (right) view of Second Street from Mizner Park

SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

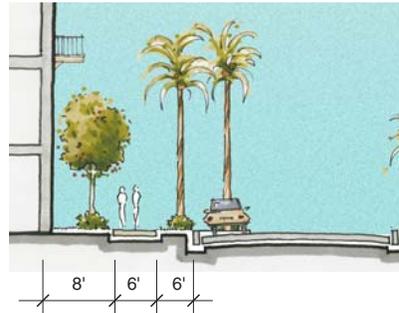
The pedestrian environment can be improved through a combination of public improvements and enhanced design guidelines for private development that include expanding sidewalk dimensions, improving the placement of landscape materials, and creating pedestrian open spaces. Key locations include: Portions of Palmetto Park Road, Federal Highway, NE and NW Second Street and Camino Real west of Federal Highway. Just as vehicles require particular design elements to be in place for safe and comfortable use, pedestrians require functional elements such as adequate space to move (side-by-side, in opposite direction, around open doors, etc.) and buffers from moving traffic (landscaping or parked cars). Palm trees are appropriate close to the curb to define the street and create a barrier from moving traffic. Shade trees with foliage beginning 7'-0" above ground level are essential in this climate. Both are required.



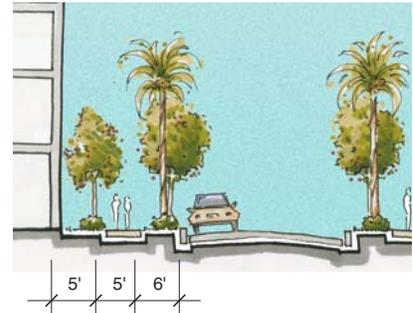
Sidewalk improvements on various streets



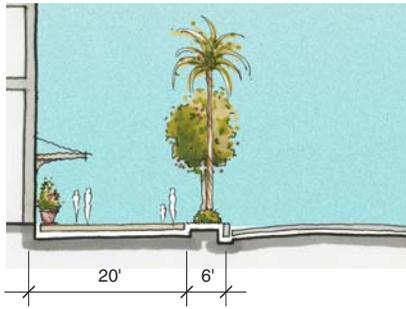
Type A - Residential



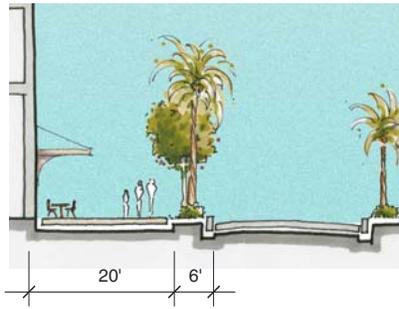
Type B - Residential



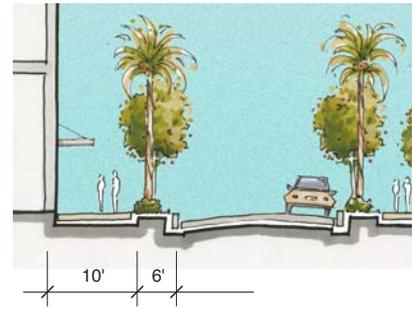
Type D - Residential



Type A - Commercial



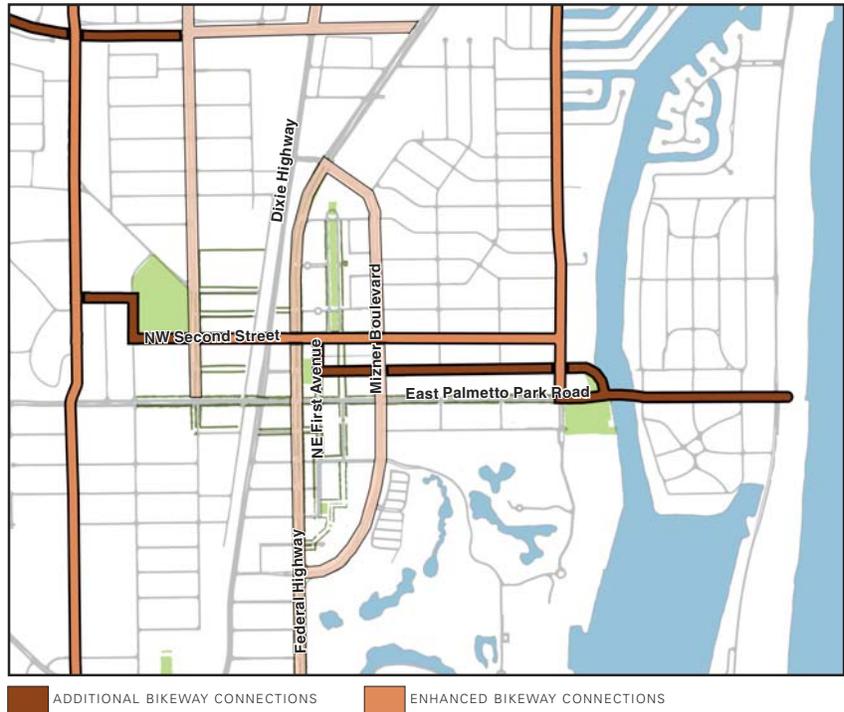
Type B - Commercial



Type D - Commercial

BIKEWAY NETWORK

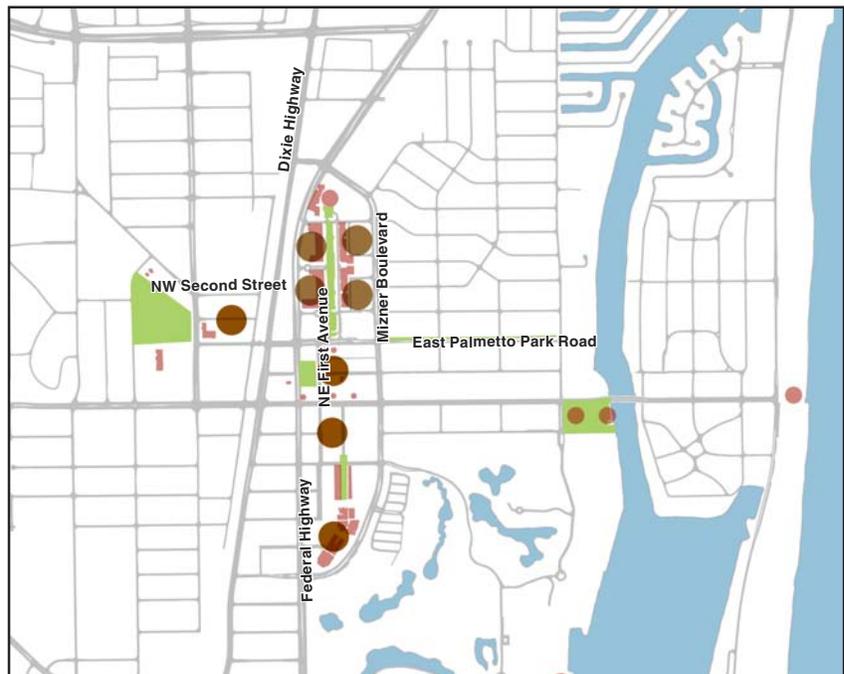
The existing bikeway system is nearly complete, but key gaps in the route between Downtown and Florida Atlantic University (FAU) should be filled (Glades Road and Fourth/Second Streets). Other gaps include the route along the A1A. In addition, the physical configuration in Downtown along NE Second Street should be an integral part of the revised streetscape program. The diagram indicates the option of a bike route along East Boca Raton Road in order to connect with the future public open space on the Wildflower site.



PARKING PROGRAM

The goal should be to serve more than one use with parking facilities, so that people will ‘park once’ when coming to Downtown. The garages at Mizner Park have excess capacity much of the time. Three approaches to managed parking should be considered:

- 1 Portland-style leasing program, in which private and public parking areas are put into a pool for joint use on a fee basis.
- 2 City-funded public garage to be built in conjunction with private development. In this case, concessions to developers on parking requirements could be tied to funding support for the garages.
- 3 Joint funding of garages in specific developments to include public parking spaces.



Proposed shared-use parking

TRANSIT INITIATIVES

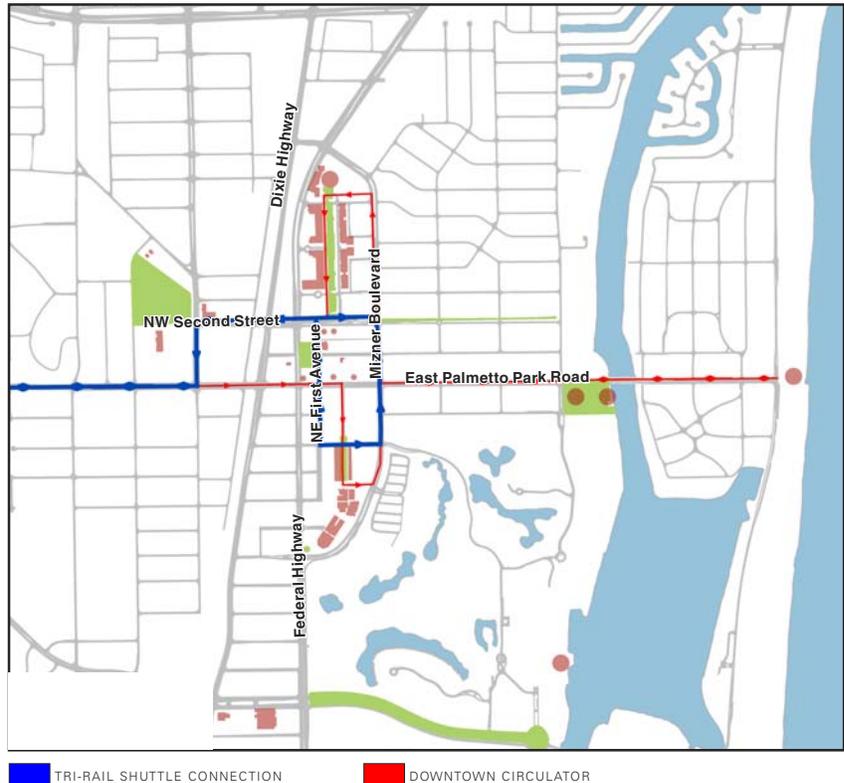
The Multimodal Transit Feasibility and Funding Study will provide ways of coordinating various forms of transit within the City and the Region. An early action program will be the shuttle system between those areas which have been identified as activity centers and the Tri-Rail Station. Although FAU and the Hospital are most likely to support such a shuttle system first, it will ultimately be expanded to serve Downtown.

The concept of a Downtown Circulator is an integral part of the recommended parking program. If parking garages are efficiently connected to a series of destinations, they are more likely to be effective. However, the immediate demand for such a facility may not be strong enough to support it.

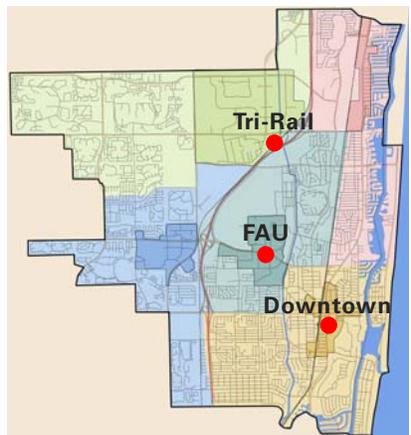
Therefore, we suggest combining these two transit initiatives by establishing a route for a shuttle to Tri-Rail and the other activity centers that makes a loop in the center of Downtown, as indicated on the diagram. The route runs from City Hall, along Second Street to Mizner Boulevard, south to SE First Street and north along Federal Highway to Second Street and back to City Hall. This route comes within a five-minute walk of most parking garages and attractions in the Downtown. As usage increases, the Downtown Circulator could be expanded as its own program.

Future transit facilities include a commuter rail station on the FEC tracks. We recommend that this be located near NW Second Street and that it be coordinated with the construction of parking facilities currently being considered for the new library.

The concept of a Downtown Circulator connecting parking garages and the major use areas within Downtown should be encouraged. An early alignment should be considered that would



provide frequent service on a limited loop and access within 500 feet of major garages and attractions in the core. A later phase could include the more extensive loop currently being considered.



MMTD District Diagram



Electric bus as downtown connector in Norfolk, VA between parking facilities and downtown destinations

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Addison Mizner described one of his design principles as follows: “Florida is flat as a pancake. You must build with a strong skyline to give your building character.” This is evident in his drawings for Boca Raton and in the towers and fanciful roofscapes of his buildings.

He would not be pleased with the results of the present system of design guidelines. The combination of a rigid height limit, standardized setbacks, and market pressure to maximize development within the standard envelope created by the guidelines have resulted in a series of large, bulky buildings of similar form. They have been described as having a crew-cut look. The resulting skyline could also be described as flat as a pancake.

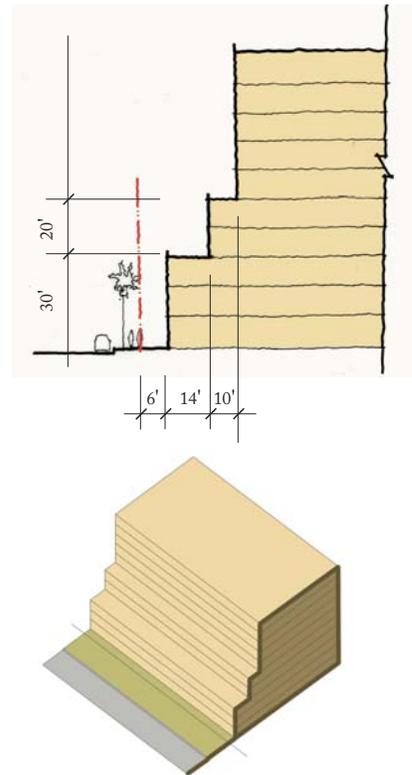
During the public process, there were widely varied views about building height. On the one hand, there were some who felt that no building should be greater than two stories, and others who felt that buildings needed to be much taller to create the sense of a downtown. But most people felt that there was something wrong with the uniformity and lack of variety that is leading to a less personal character for Downtown.

Therefore, in order to fulfill the vision for Downtown and create the quality of environment represented in the images of the Master Plan Update, revisions to the current design guidelines for Downtown need to be made.

We recommend that height be defined by the number of stories rather than a fixed number of feet. The fixed dimension has led to squat floor-to-floor

heights and makes it nearly impossible to have the type of elements that are essential to creating the skyline Mizner would have wanted. A full revision of the guidelines is beyond the scope of this Master Plan Update, but we suggest a more three-dimensional approach to resolving this issue. Pattern Books rather than Design Guidelines are often helpful because they provide actual patterns rather than abstract formulas.

We suggest an approach that begins with the scale of the street. The present design guidelines have the same setback and height requirements, irrespective of where the site is or what the scale of the street might be. We recommend that large-scale, through-streets have more vertical facades with taller buildings visible from the street. This can be an effective means of taming traffic. If drivers feel that they are driving through an ‘urban room’ they will slow down in ways and places where they typically do not if the space feels suburban. Small-scale intimate streets are often best if the buildings that are visible from the street are two to four stories in height. The present guidelines result in a building density. By revising the setback requirements, we are suggesting that the existing amount of building be redistributed. In some cases, it may be desirable to permit parts of the buildings to be higher than the present limit in exchange for more public open space and more complex building forms. Each of the four street types described previously should have its own design guideline provisions.



Diagrams of current design guidelines

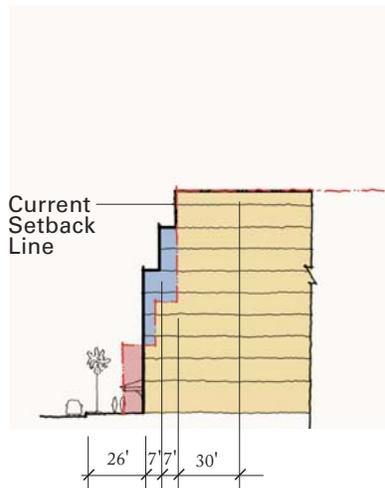
The four cross-sections and axonometric diagrams on pages 35 and 36 illustrate one way in which this could be accomplished. In each case, the amount of development permitted would be based on the current guidelines, but the physical configuration would be modified. The red line in the section drawing represents the setback and height limits called for by the present guidelines.

The plan on page 37 indicates the location for each type of street. This creates a framework for determining the forms of buildings that will create a different character as appropriate for the scale of the space.

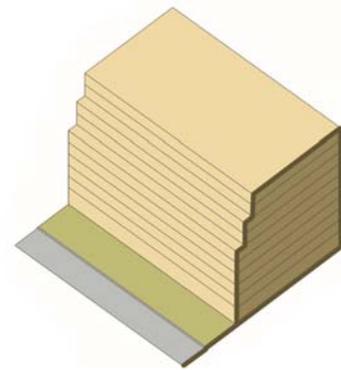
TYPE A

LARGE-SCALE STREETS WITH HEAVY THROUGH TRAFFIC

The present building setbacks are only six feet from the property line. However, the sidewalk design standards call for a minimum 26-foot setback from the curb line. In situations where this creates a hardship, a 20-foot setback will be acceptable on a case-by-case basis. To achieve this, many buildings will need more than six feet in setback. Furthermore, we suggest that the standards call for physical improvements to the public right-of-way that could include landscape or structural elements such as the trellis system illustrated at Palmetto Park Road and Federal Highway. The section illustrates a facade rising 6 stories at the first setback line with higher floors slightly stepped back above that. This would create an appropriate scale urban space for wide, heavily traveled streets, such as Federal Highway and Palmetto Park Road west of Federal Highway.



Cross-section of the proposed guidelines under Type A. Note: dashed red line denotes existing setback criteria

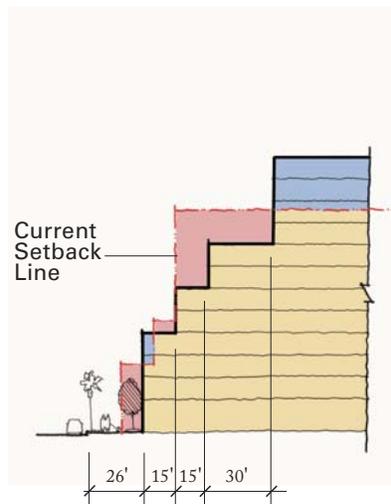


Three dimensional diagram of a section of the development

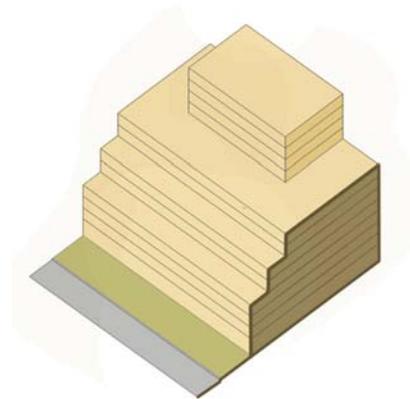
TYPE B

LARGE-SCALE STREETS WITH LESS THROUGH TRAFFIC

The minimum setback from the curb should be 26 feet, and in situations where this creates a hardship, a 20-foot setback will be acceptable on a case-by-case basis. The height of the building at that facade line should be a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 5 stories with higher floors set back as described. Higher floors would be set back further than those on Type A streets.



Cross-section of the proposed guidelines under Type B

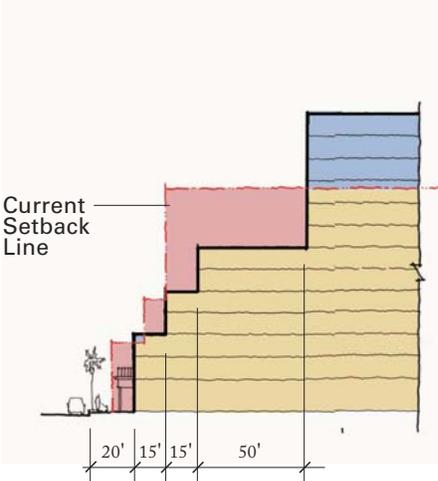


Three dimensional diagram of a section of the development

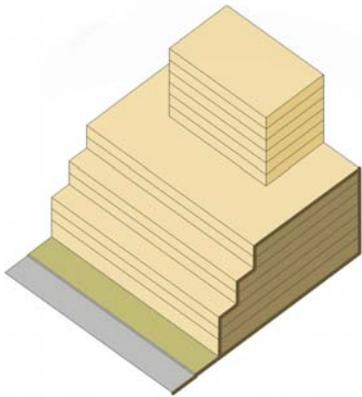
TYPE C

THREE-LANE STREETS WITH MIXED-USE ACTIVITY

These should have frequent crosswalks and would have a smaller scale facade, except where special features are needed such as the termination of the Mizner Park axis. The setbacks would start at the top of the third floor and taller elements would be less visible from the street. The minimum setback from the curb would be 20 feet, with 26 feet preferred. The facade at the first setback should be no more than 3 stories, with upper floors stepped back further than Types A and B.



Cross-section of the proposed guidelines under Type C

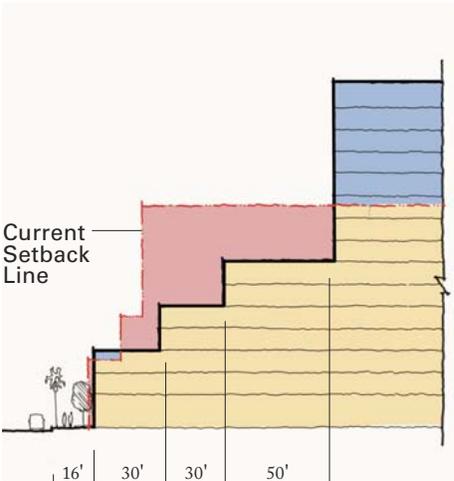


Three dimensional diagram of a section of the development

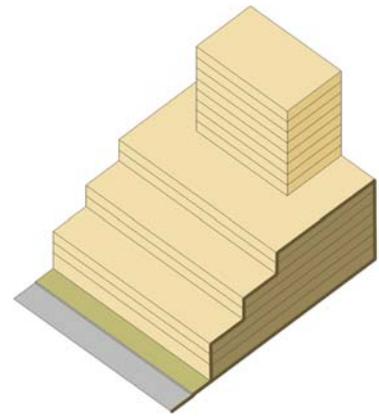
TYPE D

TWO-LANE STREETS

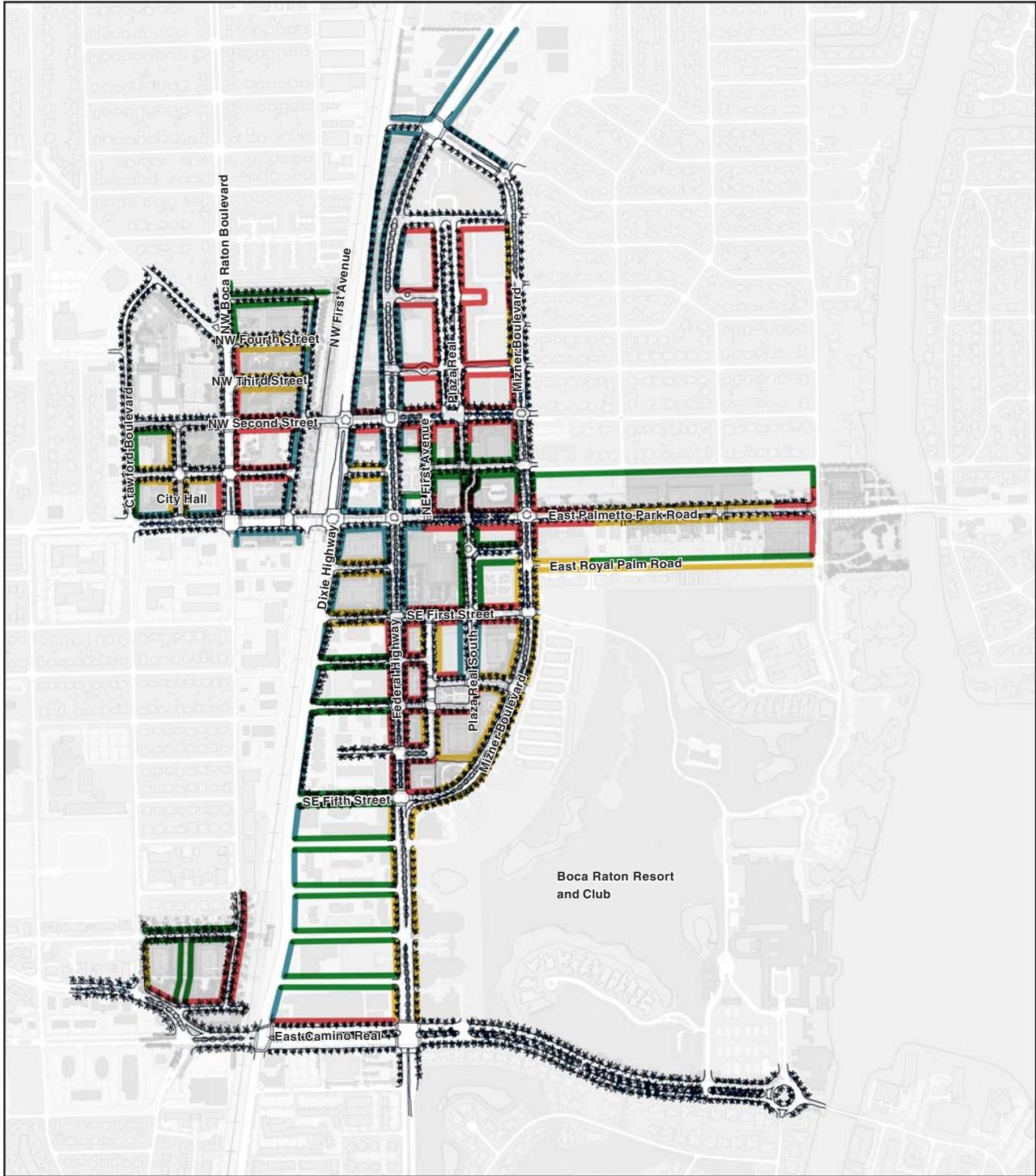
These small-scale local streets and pedestrian ways should have deeper setbacks, as illustrated with taller elements not visible from the space of the street. These deeper setbacks create a lower scale environment at the street level, which is in keeping with the pedestrian scale of the streets and sidewalks of two-lane streets. This approach is similar to Type C Streets, with deeper setbacks in the midsection of the building.



Cross-section of the proposed guidelines under Type D



Three dimensional diagram of a section of the development



A framework diagram showing the streets of Boca Raton based upon type



ARTICULATION AND CHARACTER

General massing and height are only the first step in determining the best form and scale for urban buildings. The axonometric diagram indicates ways in which the general massing should be articulated.

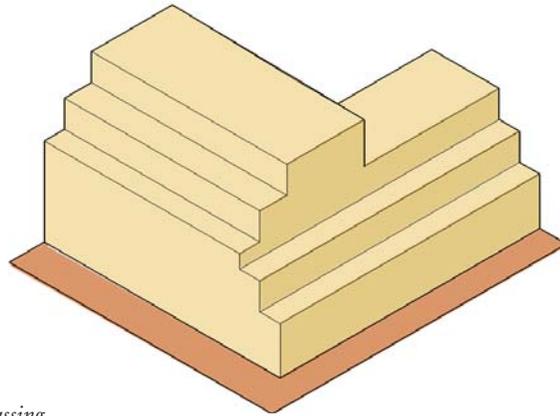
The image illustrates a site at the intersection of a Type A and Type C street. The setbacks are different and they are resolved in the massing at the corner. In this case, the corner has a tower element that is taller than the setback formula calls for. It is balanced with a cut in the massing. Together these changes create a diverse and well-scaled building.

MASSING ELEMENTS

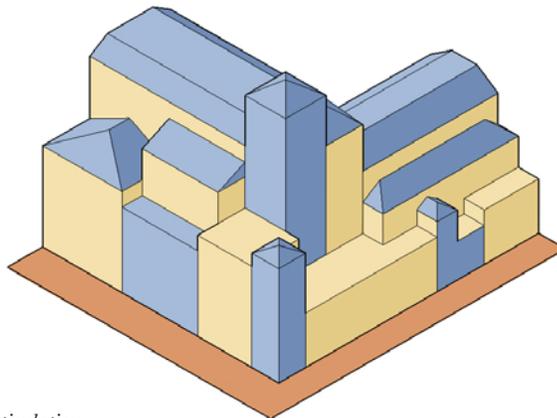
The massing is further articulated with changes of plane and color which create the image of an urban collection of buildings along a street. The length of each element should be no less than 20 feet and no more than 60 feet and no two adjacent elements should be the same length.

FACADE ARTICULATION AND COMPOSITION

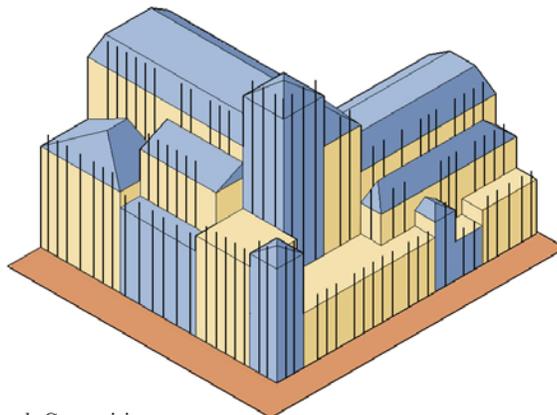
The bay lines are indicated as the basis for establishing a scale and rhythm for architectural elements such as windows, balconies, and doors. There should be a clear base, middle, and top. These patterns should reinforce the massing elements to create a diverse facade.



Massing



Articulation



Facade Composition



Massing: photo of Boca Raton Resort & Club as precedent for appropriate massing



Articulation: precedent photo of sophisticated articulation of the Everglades Club



Facade composition: a well-defined precedent of facade composition at the Boca Raton Resort & Club

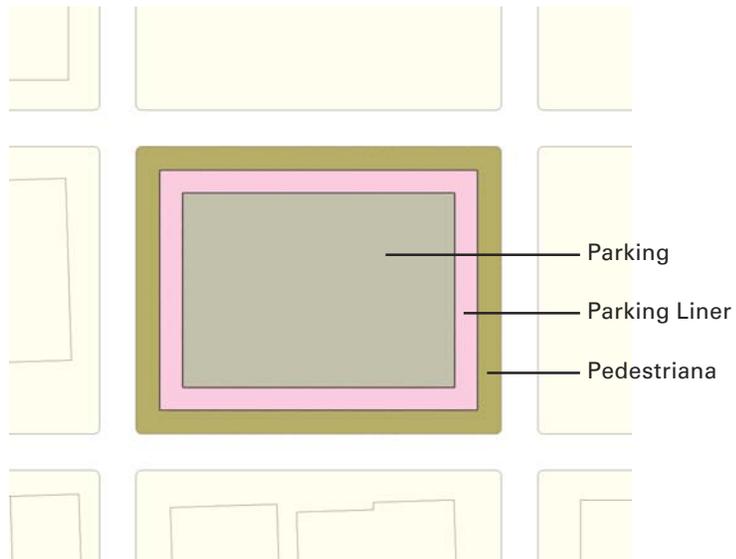
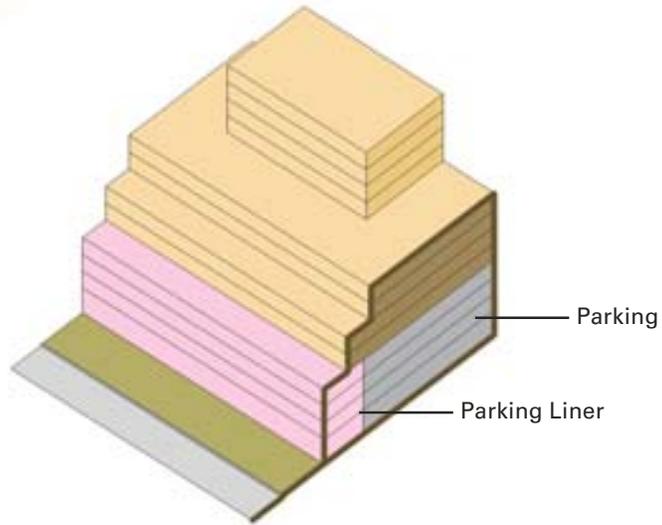


ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND INCENTIVES

PARKING

In the most successful Downtowns, parking for new development is rarely required by zoning. Developers will provide that which is required to satisfy their market, but the best situations are ones in which parking serves many different user groups. Therefore, the construction of public parking garages will be an important part of this program. There are many options for doing this including subsidies to private developments to provide public parking within them, payments by developers to the City to build public parking, or increased development rights to amortize the cost of such facilities.

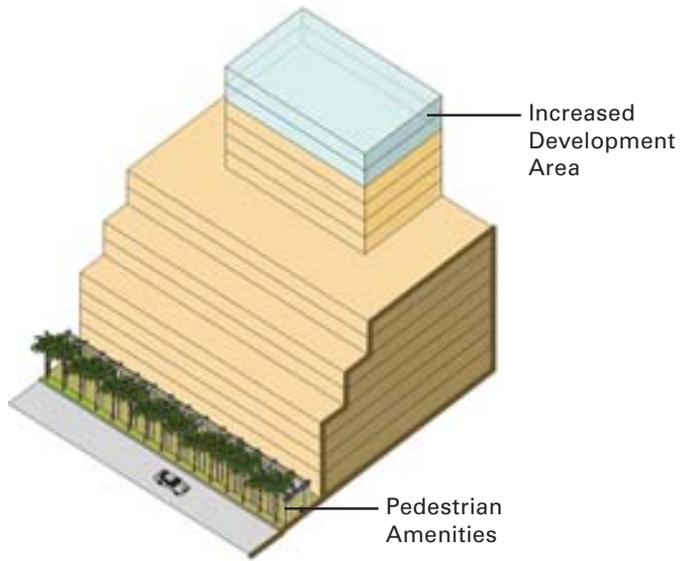
As a general criteria for all street types, garages shall not be exposed on any floor level facing a public street or open space. In addition, garages must be lined with active uses with a minimum depth of 25 feet.



Diagrams highlighting how parking can be screened and lined by new development

PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

To create wide sidewalks, arcades, pergolas, and landscaped areas with shade trees, it will be necessary to provide such space both within the public right-of-way and on private property. This may require land in addition to that currently required as open space, but it will certainly require private investment. In view of current public budgets, it will be important to establish public/private collaboration to achieve that. In exchange for significant private investment in the creation of the public realm, both in the public right-of-way and on private property, increases in the amount of development could be granted.

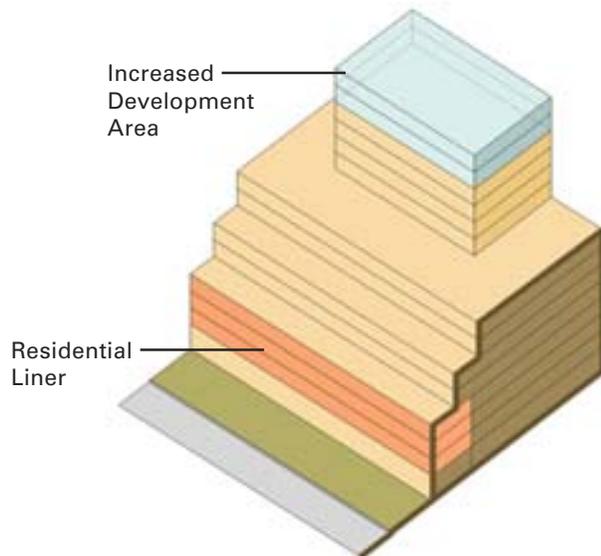


RESIDENTIAL DIVERSITY

The market study indicates the lack of balance in Downtown housing. Most of the housing is second home and top of the market. To succeed, Downtown needs a 7 day a week, 24-hour population rather than empty windows.

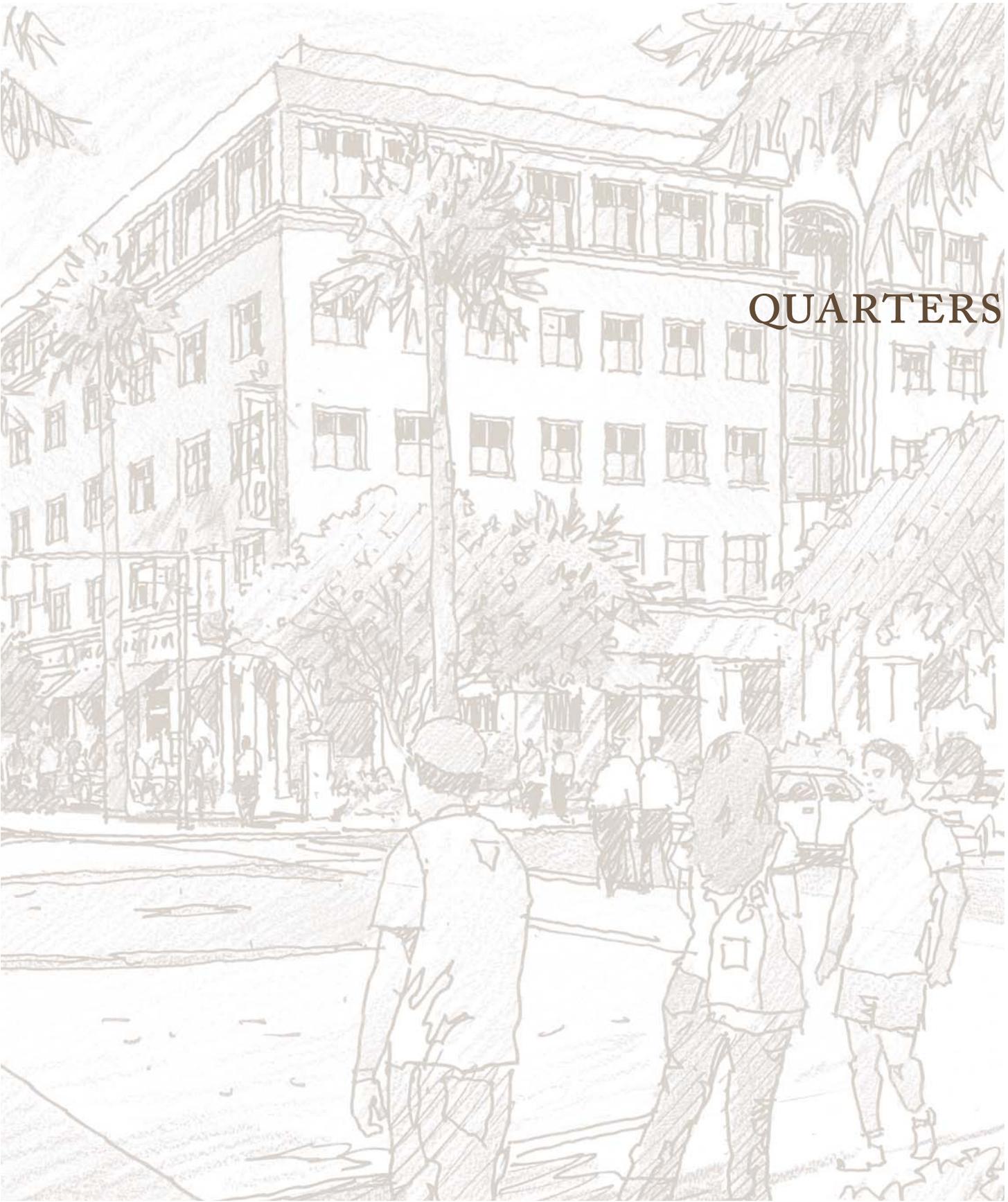
We encourage the development of the first few floors above ground-floor retail as small apartments or condominiums. It is most critical to have active windows close to the ground where they can enliven the public spaces below. This location is not desirable for the high-end market which is based on distant views, but very good for those who want to be close to the activity of Downtown. This is also the market most likely to use Downtown amenities on a regular basis and provide the animation needed for a sustainable Downtown.

We recommend that the City consider granting increased development rights in order to achieve this.



Diagrams of incentives and examples of development





QUARTERS

QUARTERS

Successful Downtowns are collections of a wide variety of places and addresses. A problem for most new development is that it tends to be uniform in character and scale. In Downtown Boca Raton, the design guidelines have tended to reinforce this pattern. Therefore, the Master Plan Update calls for a series of quarters with different character, range of uses, and even scale.

MIZNER PARK

This garden-like public space, lined with arcaded shops, is an unusual urban space for an American city. It is most like the gardens of the Palais Royal in Paris (as illustrated at right). Mizner Park is nearly complete, but needs to be further developed at both ends and have better edges along Federal Highway. This quarter should include development on the west side of Federal Highway. Its northern edge should create a gateway to Downtown.

SANBORN SQUARE QUARTER

This area should be diverse with a mix of old and new, small and large buildings, filled with eclectic uses. The small scale of public spaces within the quarter should create a contrast with the grandeur of Mizner Park and with larger buildings on its perimeter.

PLAZA REAL SOUTH

This is becoming the Downtown Main Street, especially with the character of Plaza Real South with larger buildings that still provide pedestrian-scale activities at ground level.

CITY HALL QUARTER

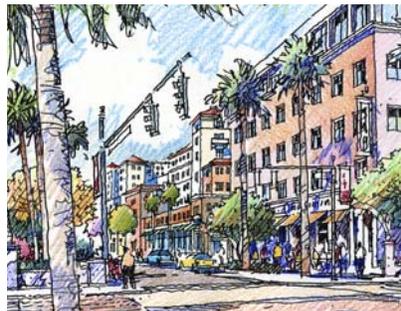
With the advent of a commuter rail terminal, this area can become the future core of Downtown and include larger-scale buildings that combine office, residential, and civic uses.

PALMETTO PARK EAST

This area has the potential to become the Champs Elysees of Boca Raton, with wide, well-landscaped, garden-like pedestrian walks along the street that are lined with residential, restaurant, hotel, and business uses. It terminates in a public access to the Intracoastal Waterway and to the bridge to the beach.

CAMINO REAL QUARTER

This southern anchor for Downtown includes the beautifully landscaped corridor east of Federal Highway and a mix of less well coordinated streetscapes. It is more a collection of individual destinations than a single quarter.



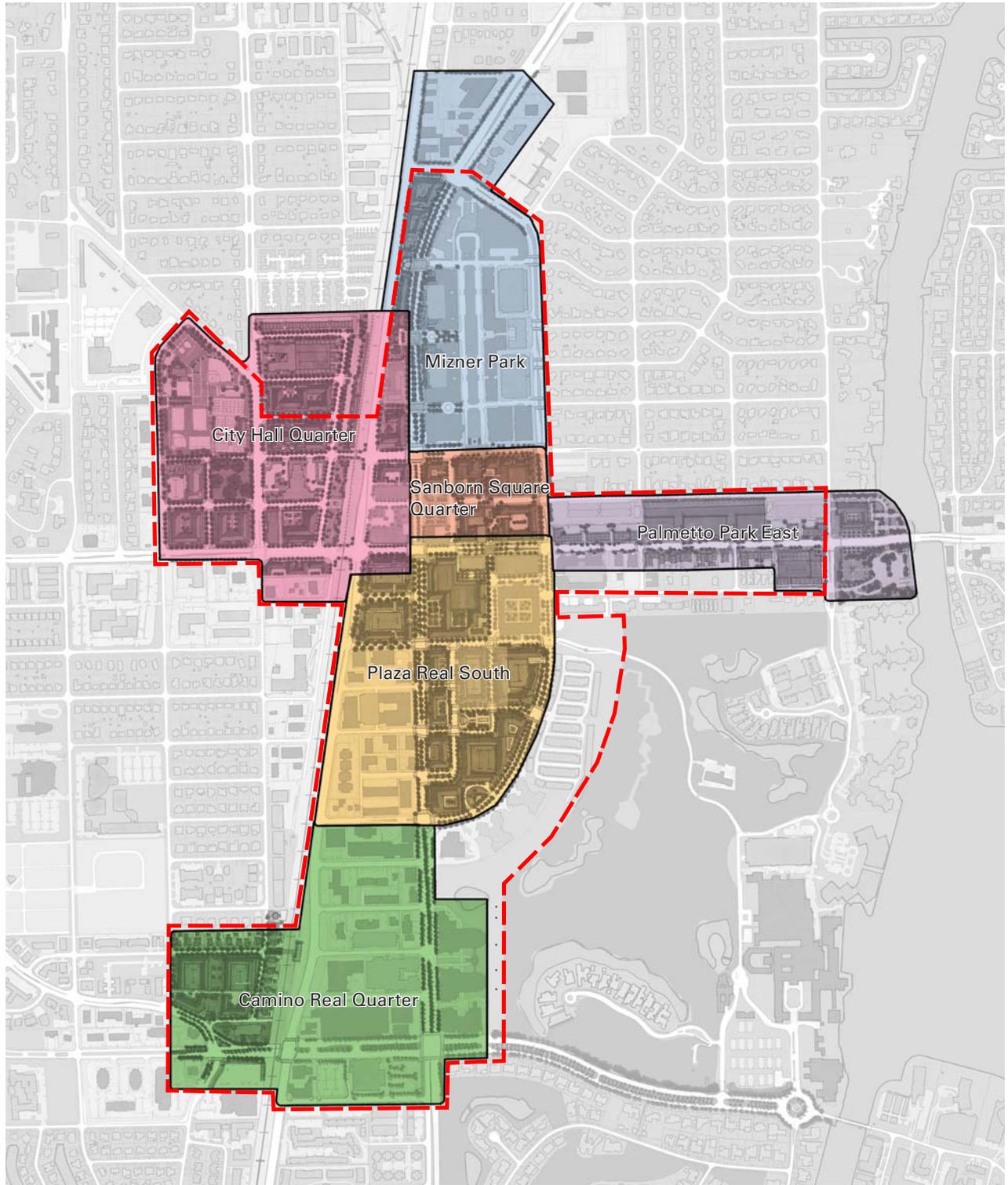
View of improvement to Plaza Real South



Overall Quarters Plan



Palais Royal in Paris



Illustrative plan with Quarters identified

--- CRA Boundary

MIZNER PARK

Mizner Park is a gathering place and features cultural events and attractions. People visit Mizner Park morning, afternoon, and evening to shop, eat, stroll, socialize, people-watch or be entertained. Some of the existing positive anchors include amphitheater performances, the art museum, Plaza Real, and the restaurant terraces.

Future opportunities for the enhancement of Mizner Park include a book shop (coming soon), additional children's programs, a performing arts school, an indoor music hall, and local souvenir shops.

As a Quarter, however, it is not complete. The next phase of cultural facilities, including the completion of the proposed concert hall should be part of the next phase of development. The Quarter is not sufficiently visible from the main approaches into Downtown. It turns its back on Federal Highway and it lacks an effective connection to Palmetto Park Road. Therefore, future initiatives should be encouraged on both sides of Federal Highway to create an attractive front door. This should include mixed-use development in a scale and character of architecture that visibly extends Mizner Park. The southern connection across NE Second Street to the Sanborn Quarter is also critical for its long-term success. Tavener Tower should be reconstructed and placed as an anchor on the southern end of Plaza Real.



Mizner Park Quarter illustrative plan



Images showing the character within the Mizner Park Quarter

SANBORN SQUARE QUARTER

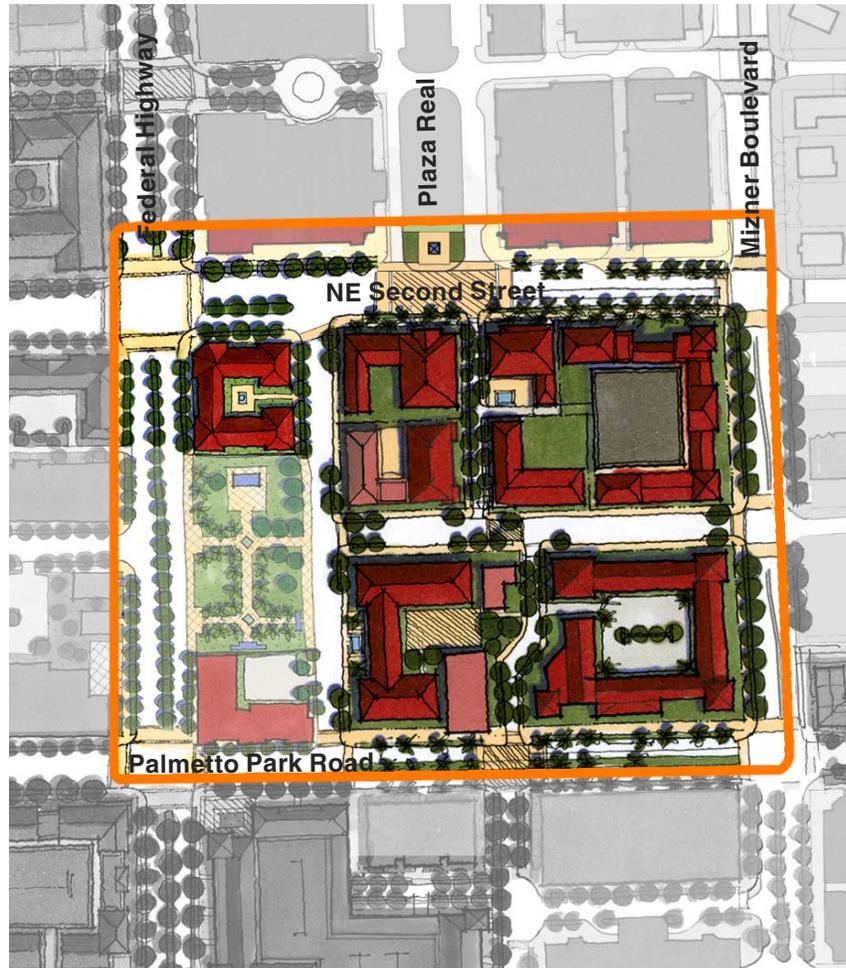
The blocks between NE Second Street and Palmetto Park Road have long been thought to hold the key to uniting the various parts of Downtown. A series of proposals over the years have failed to be realized for a variety of reasons. Those plans conceived the area primarily as a link and tried to create a grand public space. This Quarter, however, has the potential of becoming a unique address of its own, in contrast with the grandeur of Mizner Park. It could be an address that is pedestrian, edgy and organic – a place for entertainment, fun, creative experiences, and nightlife in an environment that preserves some existing buildings harmoniously with new development.

At Sanborn Square, people will be attracted to living and working in a creative environment in the midst of restaurants, art galleries, and specialty shops. This Quarter will be bustling in the afternoons, evenings, and late at night.

One existing positive anchor is Sanborn Square itself, which is often used for weddings and photo shoots. Also, some of the shops at Mizner Plaza are quality commercial concepts that could be relocated to this newly developed quarter.

Future opportunities to develop and connect Sanborn as a Quarter include clusters of small restaurants with outdoor terraces, arts retail shops, live music venues, and a wine and culinary school.

Sanborn can be a South Florida destination address for design, with creative



Illustrative Plan of one option for the Sanborn Square Quarter

offices and designers living and working there. There can also be a boutique hotel. Bollards can transform the streets at certain times to become pedestrian-only, providing the opportunity for street festivals and special events.

Whether it is developed as a single, large-scale development or an incremental one consisting of smaller individual efforts, the Quarter should include a wide range of building scales and types.

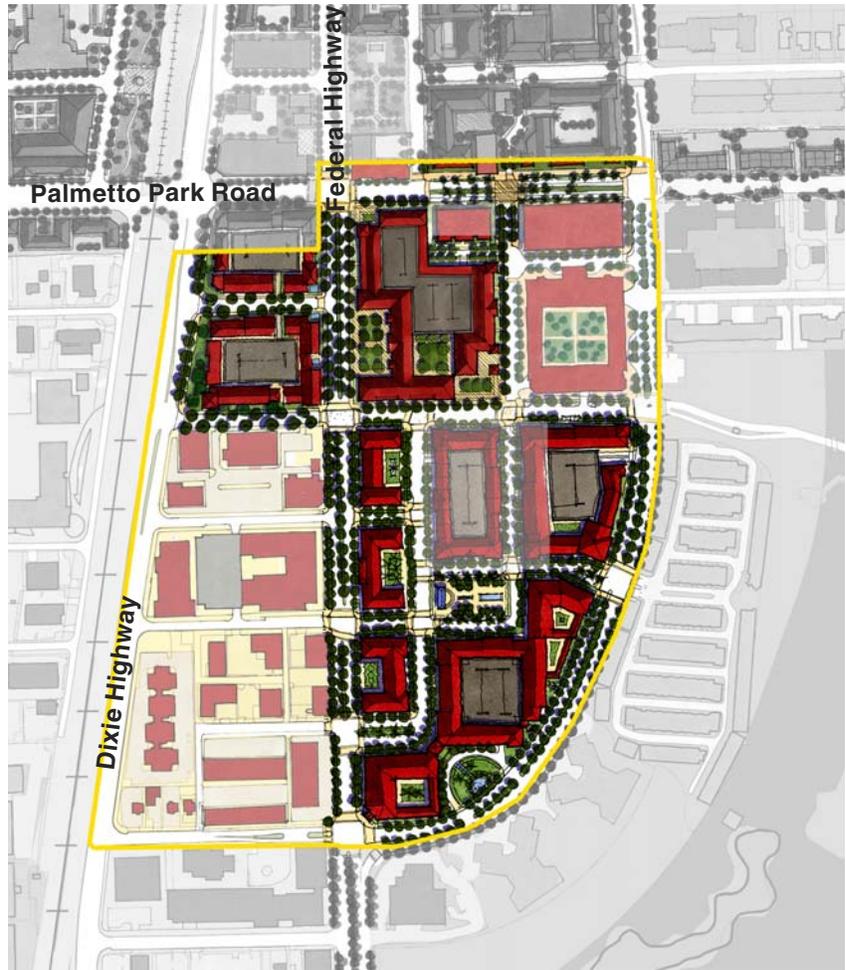


An example of the pedestrian environment

PLAZA REAL SOUTH

Much of the most recently completed large-scale development and that which is already approved for development is in this area. The result is a large-scale, Downtown-like area with a promising ‘restaurant row’ at its core. It is connected to the Royal Palm retail area which is also projected for similar redevelopment. The character of this development, governed by the current design guidelines is becoming monolithic and uniform. Therefore, more diversity is needed in the next phases, and key connections to Palmetto Park Road need to be reinforced. The suggested improvements to Federal Highway would result in a better relationship to the areas west of Federal Highway so that the entire area can be a coherent and diverse district. The tallest buildings should be closest to Federal Highway and Palmetto Park Road to reinforce the center of Downtown. Structures to the south and east should decrease in scale.

Plaza Real South is the physical center of Downtown and, as such, should be a comfortable vehicular and pedestrian urban streetscape that is accessible on a 24-hour basis. It should also be a mixed-use place for working and shopping.



Plaza Real South Quarter illustrative plan



Images showing Plaza Real South character

CITY HALL QUARTER

The key anchors for this civic heart of Downtown are separated from the most active areas by the double barriers of the railroad tracks and roads. The proposed changes to the roads and improved pedestrian crossings are intended to provide a better linkage between the two sides of these barriers. The boundaries of the City Hall Quarter straddle these barriers. Buildings of large scale along the tracks and lining the portions of Palmetto Park Road, Federal Highway, and NW Second Street can be used to tame the scale of the roads and provide a strong visual center for the Downtown. The scale should decrease to the west, especially at the edge of the neighborhoods and around a potential new civic square in the center of the City Hall Complex. The addition of a new library, parking, mixed-use buildings and additional public buildings can create a truly unique part of Downtown. A large amount of the land is publicly owned, which should be a way of introducing a wider range of housing types and prices to encourage a more diverse Downtown population.

The key to the future of this area is the proposed commuter rail station along the FEC tracks and a circulator bus system connecting it with the rest of Downtown.

The City Hall Quarter would become a community place that is welcoming, informative, inclusionary and caring. It is the address where people can meet and connect with other community members through a variety of recreational activities, meetings, and fun social experiences throughout the day and evening.



City Hall Quarter illustrative plan



An example of the pedestrian environment

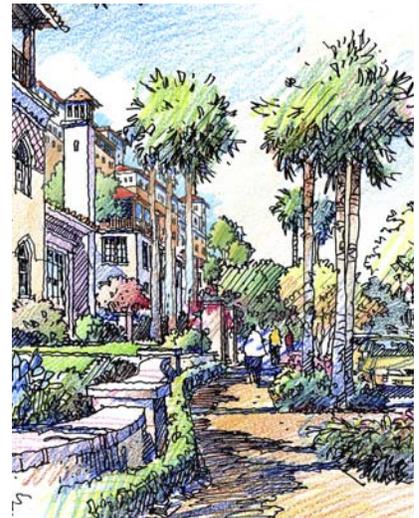
PALMETTO PARK EAST

Palmetto Park East is central Downtown’s connector to the Intracoastal Waterway and the beach. As such, it must be a calming, comfortable, and congenial experience for both pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.

It should be a welcoming and safe place for both vehicles and pedestrians, and encourage people to slow down. It is a mixed-use address that is lively during the day and evening, where people live, work, recreate, and enjoy traditional neighborhood conveniences and restaurants.

The existing anchors which support these activities include new residential condominiums, offices, restaurants, and Silver Palm Park. The future of the Wildflower property, on the north side of the street, should include public access to the waterfront, a connection under the bridge, and active uses along the waterfront. This should be the case whether the balance of the property is developed privately or if it is all a public park.

In the future, this address can be enhanced with wider sidewalks, continuous restaurant terraces, shaded areas, as well as benches and seating alternatives. Additional recreational trail systems can be developed nearby on NE Second Street to connect walkers, joggers, and cyclists to the beach.



Images depicting the pedestrian character in this quarter



An illustrative plan showing the new Palmetto Park East Quarter



INITIATIVES

INITIATIVES

In order to implement this Vision, the Master Plan Update includes a series of proposed Initiatives. Preliminary drafts of these were presented in the course of the public process and received broad-based endorsement.

Each initiative combines both public improvements and private development. Their success depends on creating the appropriate public realm and on using the design guideline approach described in the last section of this report.

Each Initiative is located within one of the Quarters. The initiatives are:

Central Palmetto Park Road and Plaza Real South Quarter

The most urgent initiative is to provide adequate pedestrian crossing in the center of Palmetto Park Road between Federal Highway and Mizner Boulevard. By overcoming the barrier that blocks mid-block pedestrian movement, this link, combined with additional development in Plaza Real South, would extend the pedestrian zone of Downtown.

NE Second Street and the Sanborn Square Quarter

Another urgent priority is connecting the southern end of Mizner Park to the Sanborn Square Quarter. The redesign of NE Second Street will make it more comfortable to cross, but it will not be fully successful without the redevelopment of at least this portion of the Sanborn Square Quarter to permit pedestrian linkages to Boca Raton Road and to Palmetto Park Road.

West Palmetto Park Road & NW Second Street with the Federal/City Hall Quarter

The barrier effect of Federal Highway must be overcome in order to begin the process of integrating the City Hall Quarter into Downtown. The major catalyst will be a new library, public parking for Downtown, and the future commuter rail station.

East Palmetto Park Road

Considerable development activity is occurring along this link to the waterfront. The character of the pedestrian realm needs to be improved in order to provide an active and lively urban place. There are options for the ways in which this can be accomplished.



Detail views of the four initiatives

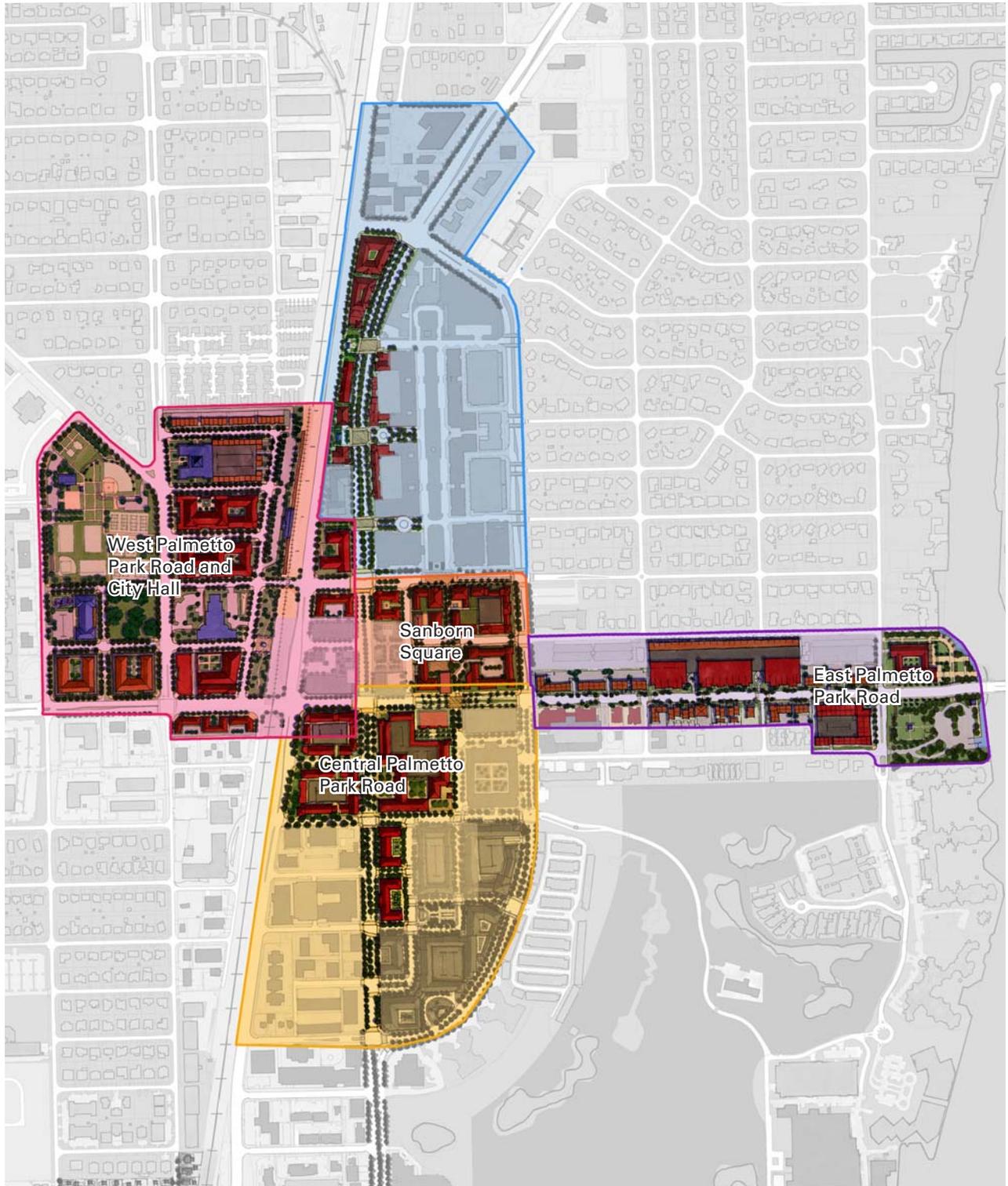


Diagram of initiatives within quarters

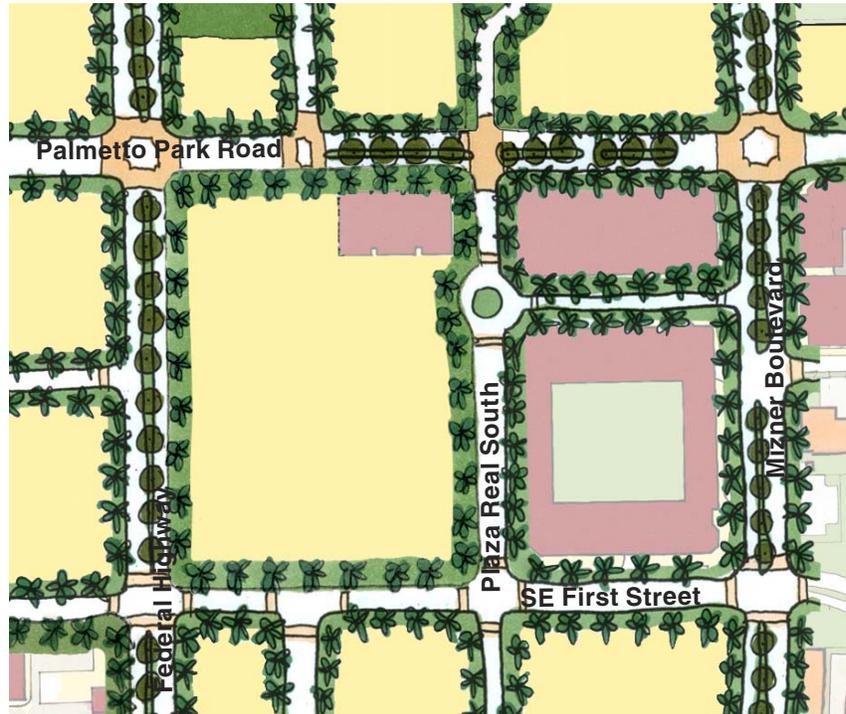
INITIATIVE 1:**CENTRAL PALMETTO PARK ROAD AND PLAZA REAL SOUTH**

The section of Palmetto Park Road between Federal Highway and Mizner Boulevard is the heart of Downtown. Its current configuration is designed to move traffic through it rather than create a sense of place. It is currently not possible to cross the street as a pedestrian in the central section. Therefore, the first initiative should be to revise the streetscapes in this area to provide a comfortable pedestrian crossing in the center of Palmetto Park Road in alignment with Plaza Real South. As illustrated in the before and after perspectives opposite, the existing raised median, which is currently an obstacle for pedestrians, must be removed and a wide, gracious pedestrian crossing should be installed that includes a pedestrian crossing light. The streetscape should include palm trees and decorative street lights perpendicular to the street to emphasize the crosswalk. Ideally, future development on the block to the North would include a vehicular as well as pedestrian connection to this point.

This should be done in collaboration with the owners of the Merrill Lynch Building to create a more pedestrian-friendly and active ground floor with restaurant and retail uses facing Plaza Real South (at a minimum) to the portion of Palmetto Park Road frontage closest to the proposed crossing.

On the north side of the street, the low storefront buildings include a small arcade which could provide the opportunity for north/south connection.

The next phase of development currently under consideration is a hotel and office complex south of Palmetto Park Road. The design of this building as illustrated in the perspective drawing should reinforce the pedestrian character



Framework diagram of the initiative



Detail illustrative plan of the initiative



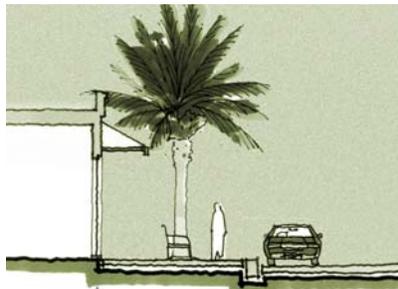
Perspective of the improved pedestrian crossing at Palmetto Park Road and Plaza Real South

of the space. The streetscape should be improved as part of the program. Based on the assumption that SE First Avenue has been vacated in the first block south of Palmetto Park Road, the streetscape plan illustrates a double block between Plaza Real South and Federal Highway. In this way, the blocks would be sufficiently large to make sure parking is within the blocks and not visible. It also makes it possible to provide additional public parking within blocks. The loss of the street should be compensated for with an increase in the amount of public open space which we have illustrated on the design plan.

Through this combination of streetscape improvements and new development, Palmetto Park Road will begin to become the center of Downtown.



Photo of existing conditions: Palmetto Park Road and First Avenue



Before and after conditions of the pedestrian environment along Palmetto Park Road

INITIATIVE 2: NORTHEAST SECOND STREET AND SANBORN SQUARE DISTRICT

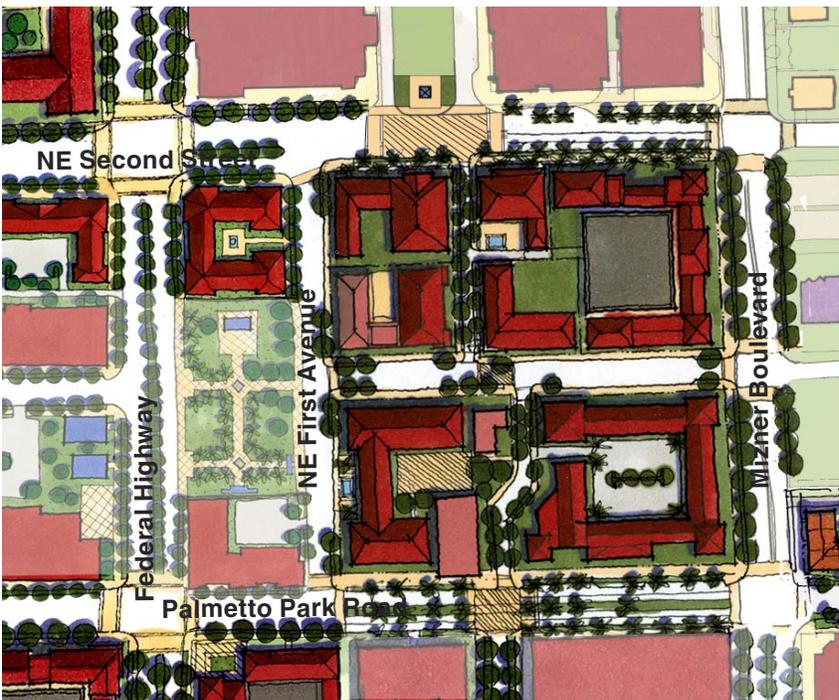
Long considered to be the missing link in Downtown's redevelopment, the area between NE Second Street and Palmetto Park Road has been planned, and re-planned several times. There are currently several proposals being advocated by one group or another, including a proposal to consolidate all of the properties into one ownership for redevelopment.

For any of these plans, the first step should be to provide a framework of pedestrian circulation and streets for the area. The diagram illustrates critical linkages to adjacent areas, as well as existing buildings and open space for which interest exists to preserve them. The creation of the pedestrian crosswalks on NW Second Street and Palmetto Park Road is described on page 30. With the elimination of SW First Avenue south of Palmetto Park Road, it is essential to have a north/south link that connects with the alignment of both Plaza Real South and Plaza Real North. This could be a pedestrian-scaled street with appropriate sidewalks or unified decorative pavement that can accommodate both pedestrians and cars. Its character should be small-scale and informal. It could be built incrementally. There are many possible configurations, but the solution should clearly connect to both the north and the south.

East/west linkages to Sanborn Square also need to be created either along the alignment of Boca Raton Road or along the north and south edges of Sanborn Square.



Framework alternative developed during the charrette



Detail illustrative plan alternative developed during the charrette



Perspective of new crossing and development at Plaza Real North and NE Second Street

The plan drawing indicates one possible configuration for the area, which was developed in the charrette. It includes an informal street running north/south through the area and a collection of buildings of various scales and types, with the preservation of some existing buildings.

The perspective drawing illustrates the entrance to this informal street. It is flanked by substantial buildings including a large-scale one that terminates the vista from Mizner Park. In the distance,

the Cramer House is visible as the termination of the first segment of the street.

The sequence of plans illustrates the way in which individual properties could be developed over time to achieve this plan. The required open space for each property is aligned with that on adjacent properties to provide a through easement. There should be a creative approach to parking and the flexibility suggested in the design guidelines to achieve this character.



Existing conditions and phased approach using the location of required public open space on individual parcels to create a small-scale street

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS

Boca Raton Historical Society Charrette: Several designs were developed in a public charrette. All of the alternatives preserved some of the existing buildings. One of these alternatives is illustrated here. The first created a north/south pedestrian connection, preserved some buildings, and proposed large-scale buildings on the two eastern corners of the site.

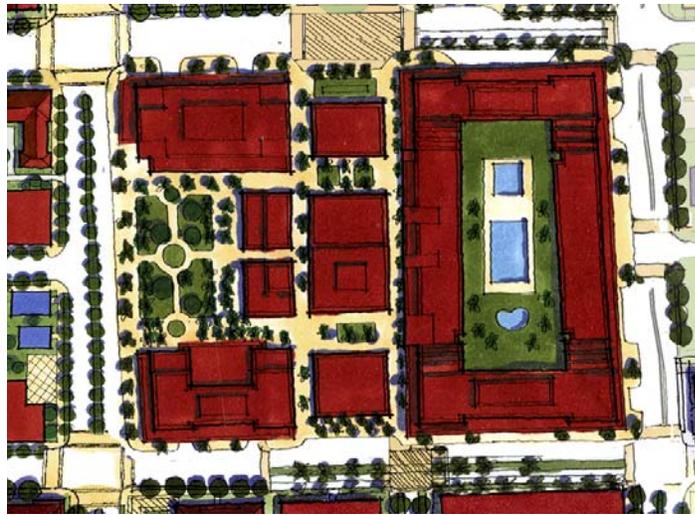
Sanborn Village Proposal: A current proposal calls for the clearance of all buildings in the area and proposes a mixed-use complex with low-scaled retail buildings along the axis of Plaza Real and larger-scale buildings on the four corners. The retail buildings in the center create a series of pedestrian promenades which connect the north/south axis and provide vistas to the west to Sanborn Square and the historic Town Hall. One level of public parking is provided under the entire site. This is intended to serve all of Downtown and is located within five minutes of most Downtown activities. Parking for the office and residential buildings will be provided in above-ground garages.

The concept of lower-scale buildings in the center and the diversity of architecture is consistent with the design guidelines, as is the pedestrian system.

However, other aspects should be considered in the design if the project moves forward. To conform to the design guidelines, the tallest buildings should be the ones closest to Federal Highway. There should be some form of vehicular access in the public spaces. Some of the existing buildings should be either preserved or reconstructed to add to the richness of the small-scale environment created in the center of the site.



Historical Society (mid-level development)



Illustrative plan for Crocker proposal in the spine area



Imagery from the Crocker proposal for the spine area

Other Alternatives: There are many possibilities for this area. Another possible alternative is illustrated on this page.

KEY ELEMENTS

The following key elements should be part of any plan for the area:

- » A pedestrian connection between NE Second Street and Boca Raton Road and between Boca Raton Road and Palmetto Park Road. We also recommend a vehicular connection be developed. The scale and size of this connection could be either a collection of Palm Beach Mizner Vias or a small-scale street. To be consistent with the idea of creating a village atmosphere, we suggest that larger-scale spaces not be considered.
- » Sanborn Square should be a focus of the design as should the historic Town Hall. Buildings could be largest in scale along Palmetto Park Road close to Federal Highway, somewhat smaller in scale along Second Street and lower in scale along Mizner Boulevard. The smallest-scale buildings should be in the center. It is desirable to have public circulation, either vehicular or pedestrian along the north and south sides of the Square. At present, only the sides or backs of buildings face the Square. Buildings should have active facades with public uses opening onto the Square. First Avenue should either remain, or, if it no longer functions as a street, should have active uses facing the Square.



Small grid of streets

- » Some of the historic buildings in the center of the area should either be preserved in place if possible, or moved to another location within the Quarter, or have their facades reconstructed as part of the development.
- » There should be a full range of uses and a wide range of type and scale of buildings.

INITIATIVE 3: CITY HALL QUARTER

The City Hall Quarter is not currently perceived to be an integral part of Downtown. The combined barriers of the FEC Railroad line, Dixie Highway, Federal Highway, and the types of buildings and uses along the tracks make it difficult to perceive this area as part of Downtown.

However, the area has great potential as an important quarter. Current proposals include a new library and Downtown parking facility, as illustrated in the Phase 1 diagram. The plan suggests relocating NW First Avenue to the west to provide a landscaped buffer and potential parking area along the FEC Tracks.

The anticipated commuter rail station will be located in this area. It should be conceived as an inter-modal facility and be located south of the new library site along the relocated street. This area will then be an ideal location for intense Transit-Oriented Development. Furthermore, there is a large amount of City-owned land, which means that development can be accomplished in a more cost-effective way than elsewhere in Downtown. This could be an opportunity to provide a wide range of more affordable housing since land cost is one of the obstacles to such development.

The long-term goal is to have a full range of uses in the area including mixed-income residential, office, civic, retail, and recreational uses. The scale of the tracks and Dixie Highway could be improved with large-scale buildings. Investment in the area could bring much-needed street improvements.

There are two key initiatives to begin this process: The first is to improve pedestrian crossings at Federal and both Second Street and Palmetto Park Road. The second is the new library and



Phase 1



Phase 2



Illustrative plan showing the phasing and final plans of the City Hall Quarter



Perspective of the improved pedestrian environment along central Palmetto Park Road at Federal Highway

garage. Longer-range initiatives include mixed-use buildings on several blocks. If the Police Department is relocated to a more central location in the City, its site could be an ideal one for office use.

The City Hall complex uses land inefficiently and should be redeveloped at some point in the future. The most significant landmarks in the area are the banyan trees, now sadly surrounded by parked cars. They could be part of a significant public open space around which civic and mixed-use buildings would provide a dignified focus for the City Hall Quarter.



Photo of existing conditions at Federal Highway and Palmetto Park Road

INITIATIVE 4: EAST PALMETTO PARK ROAD

East Palmetto Park Road is currently planned to be developed with Downtown-scale buildings. The goal is to create a lively mixed-use street leading to the Intracoastal Waterway and the beach. The properties are constrained by the depth of the blocks and are not connected to the streets to the north. Although this limits the capacity of the area to become a 'Main Street,' it is still possible to develop a combination of hotel, office, and residential buildings with some ground-floor retail, especially restaurant, café, and destination uses. The design of the pedestrian experience should include wide planting beds with a meandering sidewalk suggesting a grand approach to the waterfront.

The public realm can be developed in one of two ways: The preferred solution is to reconfigure Palmetto Park Road as a three-lane road with parking on both sides. The other is to keep a four-lane section but eliminate the parking. In either case, a much wider sidewalk area is created. We further recommend that development on each side include front yard space to provide additional landscape material.

This street leads to Silver Palm Park, which is also in need of improvement. The plan indicates a more compact parking area to provide space for active uses including a café or pavilion on the water. The Wildflower property should be included in this program, either as a public park or as a development site with public access to the waterfront. In either case, it is important to provide pedestrian access along the water between these two park areas.



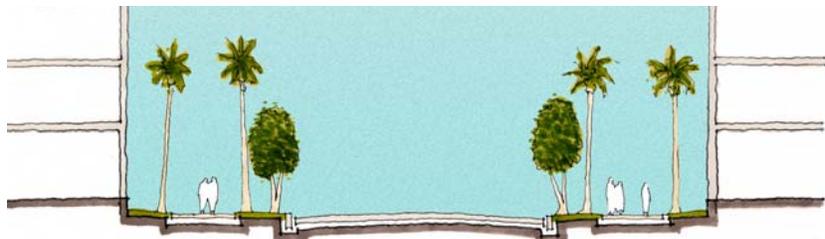
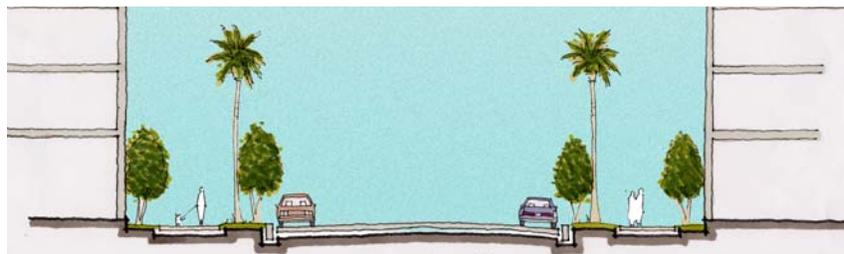
Illustrative master plan of East Palmetto Park Road



Existing conditions



Option showing parks on both parcels



Three- and four-lane options on an improved East Palmetto Park Road



A new vision for East Palmetto Park Road



Photograph of the existing pedestrian environment and streetscape



IMPLEMENTATION



IMPLEMENTATION

INITIATIVES

The Master Plan Update is organized to facilitate implementation.

The two types of elements, Frameworks and Development Quarters, each have their own method of being implemented. The Frameworks are mostly in the public realm but require a collaboration with private property owners and developers. The Development projects are on private property, but must have public endorsement to be built.

The plan also identifies specific initiatives, all of which include both public improvements and private development. This calls for an effective collaboration among public agencies and private owners. Each initiative requires both a holistic, interdisciplinary approach as well as strong leadership. This is generally best accomplished with either a Task Force or a Steering Committee to review and support the initiatives.

In our experience, the most effective organizational structure for implementing such a program is one in which there is a group of citizens and public officials charged with the task. The most common form in other parts of the U.S. is to have a Redevelopment Authority Board appointed by Council but not necessarily consisting of Council members. This group then sees the redevelopment effort as its primary task rather than one of many responsibilities. Another effective approach is to establish a Task Force or Steering Committee. In that alternative, we recommend that the Downtown Advisory Committee (which was recently created by the CRA Board) become the Downtown Steering Committee responsible for the implementa-

tion of the plan. Since this Committee serves at the pleasure of the CRA Board, it would be led by the Chair of the CRA and report to the Board on a regular basis.

Equally important is the organization of City staff for the implementation of the program.

We therefore recommend that each initiative have a Task Force consisting of key City staff and the key private sector individuals involved in implementing the initiative. The overall coordination of the effort will require a senior staff person within City Hall with adequate support staff.

This is critical in order to maintain the interdisciplinary nature of the process. Most efforts are currently being accomplished by agencies or departments with a single focus. For example, the improvements to the public realm include crosswalks, revised cartway designs, and streetscapes. The effort would normally be led by the Municipal Services Department. But the focus of such a department is generally on vehicular traffic movement, not on the other aspects of street design. The design work should be done, not by an engineering firm focusing primarily on the mechanics of the design, but by an interdisciplinary design team that will find creative solutions for the whole.

It is the role of the Steering Committee, the CRA Board, and the Initiative Task Forces to make sure this is accomplished.

The plan also identifies the projects which are most important to move forward with quickly. These include:

- 1 Central Palmetto Park Road including crosswalk and street improvements
- 2 New development south of Palmetto Park Road
- 3 NE Second Street improvements with crosswalk extending to Mizner Park, combined with partial or full redevelopment of the Sanborn Square Quarter
- 4 City Hall Quarter development including the new library and parking facility as well as crosswalks at Federal Highway and both Second Street and Palmetto Park Road
- 5 East Palmetto Park Road improvements and Silver Palm Park combined with development on the Wildflower property
- 6 Development a comprehensive parking program:
 - Step 1* Set up a governing mechanism
 - Step 2* Conduct a parking needs study to evaluate the gap between spaces needed and available supply
 - Step 3* Organize property owners and city agencies to develop a coordinated system

TRANSPORTATION

A series of approaches and initiatives will be required to implement the transportation recommendations. These fall into three broad categories: Policy, Regulation, and Projects.

POLICY

On streets that are not under the direct control of the City (most notably state routes such as Federal Highway), the City will have to articulate its preferred policies (for example, to lower vehicle speeds, improve pedestrian environment, etc.) and begin a campaign of lobbying and negotiation with agency partners. This may involve the identification of funding that can be used to implement projects, then working through DOT during the project implementation process. It may mean implementing changes as part of ongoing maintenance or upgrading programs. In any case, the effort will have to be diligent and long-term.

REGULATION

Many of the proposed transportation improvements can happen as part of redevelopment in partnership with the private sector. For this to occur, however, the proper codes and ordinances must be in place to communicate needs to individual property owners.

PROJECTS

On the streets the City does control, a process of project identification, prioritization, and funding must take place. The first two can largely be extrapolated from

this master planning effort. The issue of funding, however, will require additional work. Funds may be available from Federal sources in the form of annual transportation allocations. There may be opportunities to apply for grants or enhancement funding. There may also be opportunities to explore options such as a business improvement district, tax increment financing, or revenue bonds to create a greater pool of local funds.

REGULATORY MECHANISMS

To implement the concepts presented in this Master Plan Update, the City will need to make appropriate modifications to various instruments that guide development and planning. These include: the City's Comprehensive Plan including the Multi-Modal Transportation District Regulations, Amended Downtown Plan, and the Amended Downtown Development Order. In addition, the City should participate in FDOT's Liveable Communities Program.

